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## Democratic Nature of Urban Development in Groningen in the 1980s - PTT, Brink, Casino and Museum

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**Democratic Nature of Urban Development in Groningen in the 1980s**  
**– PTT, Brink, Casino and Museum –**

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## **Abstract**

It is essential for democracy that political parties should act within their promulgated policy frameworks, which are formally represented in election programmes. If political parties deviate from this principle, the election would lose its meaning, jeopardising democracy. In this respect, planning in Groningen in the 1970s, which realised progressive plans like the traffic circulation plan, was democratic, although it was criticised for lacking public participation. However, planning in the 1980s casts serious doubt on its democratic nature. Various large-scale projects were promoted, and they caused harsh criticism even within the government party, Labour Party. This paper focuses on four projects, that is, the PTT (office development), Brink (residential towers), Casino and Museum, all of which were planned in or next to the inner city of Groningen in the 1980s. This paper will examine these projects in terms of the policy frameworks of the Labour Party, which were created in the 1970s. These projects brought about drastic change of historical landscape, and were clearly contrary to the party frameworks or those measures that were introduced to guarantee the frameworks, such as the local land use plan. As a result, they gave rise to not only strong opposition among citizens, but also criticism of party members who still cherished those party frameworks.

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## List of abbreviation

(political parties)

- CDA:** *Christian-democratisch Appel* (Christian Democratic Appeal)  
**CPN:** *Communistische Partij van Nederland* (Communist Party of the Netherlands)  
**D'66:** *Democraten '66* (Democrats '66)  
**GPV:** *Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond* (Reformed Political Association)  
**PPR:** *Politieke Partij Radicals* (Political Party Radicals)  
**PSP:** *Pacifistisch-Socialistische Partij* (Pacifistic Socialist Party)  
**PvdA:** *Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party)  
**VVD:** *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)

(citizens' organisations)

- BOOS:** *Bewoners Overleg Omgeving Station* (Residents Consultation Surroundings Station)  
**BOV:** *Breed Overleg Verbindingskanaal* (Broad Consultation Verbindingskanaal)  
**ENFB:** *Enige Echte Nederlandse Fietzers Bond* (Dutch Cyclists' Union)

(planning documents)

- GBP:** *Globaal Bestemmingsplan Binnenstad Groningen 1976* (Broad Local Land Use Plan for the Inner City of Groningen)  
**SBP:** *Stedebouwkundig Plan* (Urban Design Plan)

(others)

- B&W:** *college van burgemeester en wethouders*  
**VROV:** *werkgroep Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Verkeer* (working group Housing, Urban Planning and Traffic)  
**PTT:** *Posten Telegrafie en Telefonie* (Postal Services)

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Planning in the 1970s

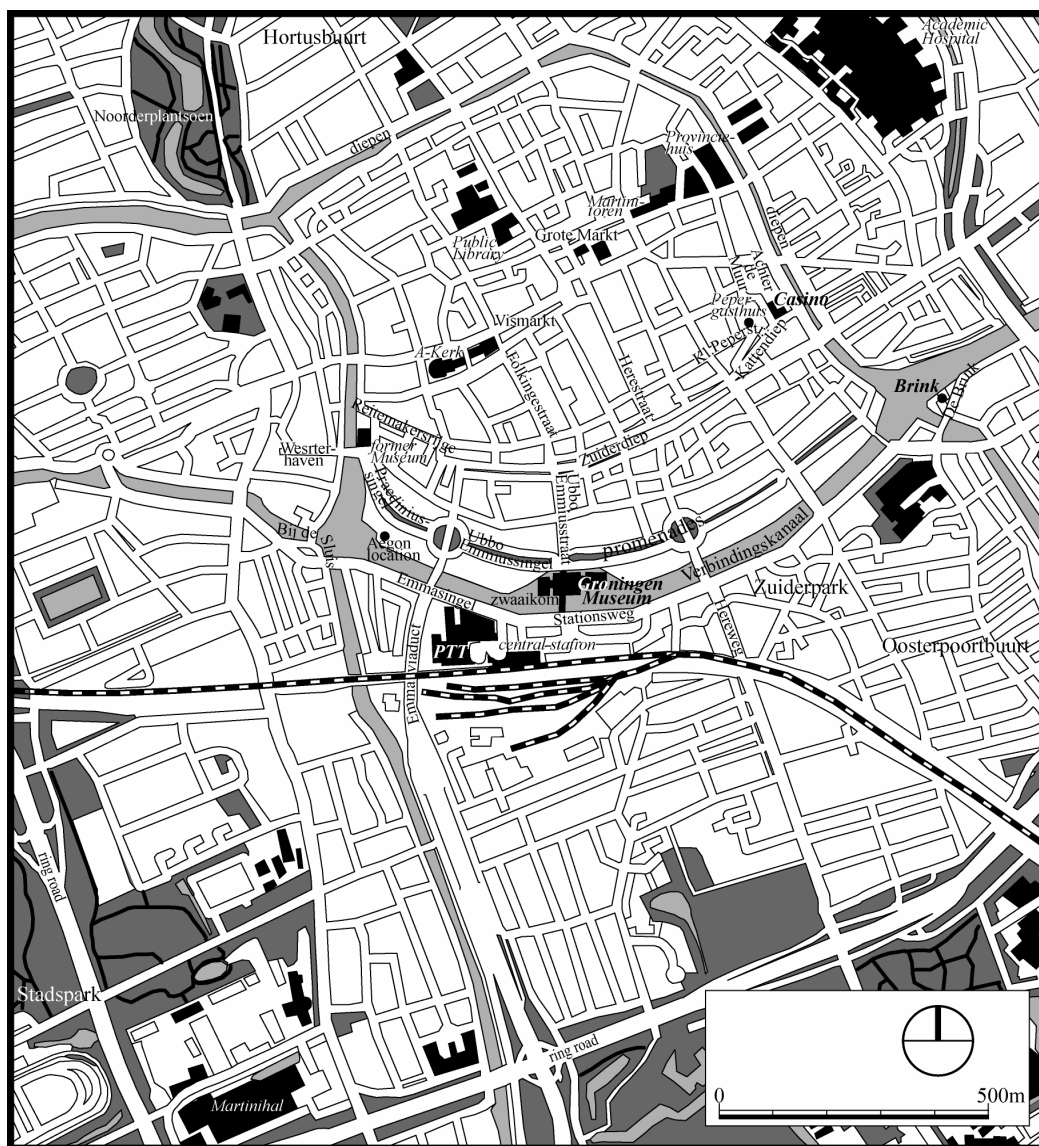
The Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA) of Groningen had tried to make its identity clear under the slogan of "polarisation" since late in the 1960s. This effort stood out in the field of urban planning. Max van den Berg (PvdA) became *wethouder* (political executive) of urban planning in 1970, shelved existing plans for the inner city, and made a new principle of urban planning, the Objective Inner City Groningen<sup>1</sup>, generally called the Objectives Document, which was approved by the municipal council in 1972. This Objectives Document embraced the strengthening of the "encounter function"<sup>2</sup> of the inner city as an ultimate goal for planning. For this, it states, concerning urban design, that "the structure of the inner city<sup>3</sup> and city centre must not be broken", and argues for the necessity of protecting or restoring "the interior quality that is characteristic of the inner city and city centre" or "the street space, such as formed by the existing building"<sup>4</sup>. Concerning building use, it advocates the "interweaving of functions" and strongly rejects "mono-functional sections", like office districts<sup>5</sup>. Concerning traffic facilities, "In the city centre and perhaps also elsewhere in the inner city, pedestrians must in principle have priority over car traffic" and no through traffic must be possible in these areas<sup>6</sup>, according to this document.

The Groningen division of the PvdA has drafted election programmes peculiar to the city since the election in 1970, and its election programme of 1974 clearly integrates the Objectives Document, saying, "The policy related to the inner city and city centre is based on the "Objectives Document Inner City Groningen", which was already accepted by the municipal council"<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the Groningen division facilitated the discussion within the party through intra-party organs, such as district teams, working groups and general member meetings, and substantiated these formal party frameworks<sup>8</sup>. Van den Berg introduced progressive plans, such as the Traffic Circulation Plan (*Verkeerscirculatieplan*, VCP) or the Broad Local Land Use Plan for the Inner City of Groningen (*Globaal Bestemmingsplan Binnenstad Groningen 1976*, GBP), without providing enough opportunities for public participation, and caused strong criticism from shopkeepers or business organisations<sup>9</sup>. Although rank-and-file party members of the PvdA could not directly participate in making these individual plans either, they generally agreed with these plans, because these plans were consistent with the party frameworks.

### 1.2 Omslag (Change)

The PvdA of Groningen lost two seats at the local election in May 1978, but still remained the biggest party group with 16 seats out of 39 in total. It formed the B&W (*college van burgemeester en wethouders*, political executive office<sup>10</sup>) consisting of only left wing parties, as before. Four *wethouders* were from the PvdA, one from the CPN and one from the D'66. On the other hand, Van den Berg did not stand for this election, leaving for national politics<sup>11</sup>. His *wethouder* of urban planning was





**Figure 1:** City of Groningen (inner city and its environs)

succeeded by Ypke Gietema, who had been party group leader since 1974. Gietema was in the early days busy facilitating previously fixed policies or winding up problems originating from them. He promoted the urban renewal in the older parts of the city, as well as the development of the new neighbourhood, Beijum, in the outskirts area. He was engaged in settling objections lodged with the *Gedeputeerde Staten* (political executive office at the provincial level) against the GBP, which was approved by the municipal council in February 1978. Concerning the objection by the Postal Services (PTT) about its shipping office in the south of the central station, he achieved the agreement by widening the access road and increasing parking spaces for it, as demanded by the PTT.

After this approach run, he launched big projects one after another, which he himself calls "omslag" (change) and deviate from the existing PvdA frameworks, within or

next to the inner city in the 1980s. The buildings realised through these projects have drastically changed historical landscape of Groningen. Because these projects were proposed in the middle of the existing neighbourhoods, they gave rise to strong opposition movements by residents. Simultaneously, they also led to a bitter conflict between, what Gietema calls, "*vernieuwers*" (renewers) and "*behouders*"<sup>12</sup> (preservationists) within his own party. Going through the turbulent 1980s, the PvdA of Groningen suffered from a historical defeat at the election in 1990, losing 7 seats from 18 seats, which were won through a historical victory in 1986. This "disastrous"<sup>13</sup> result necessitated a fundamental change in urban planning.

This paper will try to understand in what respects those projects, which were planned in Groningen in the 1980s, deviated from the PvdA frameworks created in the 1970s, particularly paying attention to criticism within the PvdA. This paper will also examine how public participation, that is, a measure to integrate public opinions directly, was guaranteed in those projects. In addition, this paper will review precisely the arguments made by opposition movements as well as those by proponents. These analyses could contribute to evaluating planning in Groningen in the 1980s in terms of democracy and public interests. Materials used are local newspapers, planning documents published by the municipality and various materials, such as minutes, related to the Groningen division of the PvdA. The author interviewed some PvdA members who were involved in planning in the 1970s and 80s. In the following sections, projects are analysed roughly in chronological order.

## **2. PTT**

### **2.1 PTT in Ulgersmaborg**

In 1974, the cabinet Den Uyl announced a plan of decentralising national departments for stimulating economy in the northern Netherlands. The plan included moving the Central Management of the PTT, with 4,300 employees, from Den Haag to Groningen. The PvdA of Groningen welcomed this plan, and Gietema, who became party group leader as well as councillor the same year, insisted at the municipal council meeting in December that the PTT should be moved as planned, in response to the strong resistance by the PTT itself.

In the beginning, the municipality planned to locate the coming PTT in Ulgersmaborg, which is a few kilometre to the northeast from the inner city. Ulgersmaborg was not an isolated business park that was developed in the middle of the countryside, but a part of the new town, Noorddijk, which had been planned since the 1960s. The plan of Noorddijk sustained a huge cutback in 1974 as a result of the much slower population growth than expected. However, the next year, the national government designated the city of Groningen as "Growth City"<sup>14</sup>, in which suburbanisation was intensively tackled, and Noorddijk had become the essential part of this initiative. The municipality published a report, "Groningen Growth City", in March 1976. According to this report, Noorddijk would consist of, in addition to Ulgersmaborg, residential neighbourhoods Lewenborg, Beijum and Oosterhoogebrug, and 6,000 to 7,000 houses would be built there for the ultimate population of 32,500. The report reserved 15 hectares in Ulgersmaborg for the Central Management of the PTT. These neighbourhoods were intended to provide "urban living"<sup>15</sup>, according to the Integrated Policy Plan<sup>16</sup> 1975-1979, which was approved by the municipal council in December 1974. It explains the concept "urban living" as follows:

We take the standpoint that we should not try to copy suburban environment too much. (...) We find it more important that we benefit optimally from the immediate closeness of the natural city. (...) Urban living differs from living in the countryside and must also (continue to) differ. Urban living will, more than it is the case now, have to indeed obtain the meaning of "living in a city", of benefiting to the maximum (not only on free Saturday, but also weekdays) from all those advantages that the city offers. The strong interaction between the inner city and new neighbourhoods, between the public and private sphere, and the mixture of functions are decisive for what is described as urbanity by Hans Paul Bahrtdt.

The report "Groningen Growth City" elaborates on traffic facilities as infrastructure for "urban living" in Noorddijk. It proposes the exclusive bus road, Oosterhamriktracé, linking Noorddijk with the inner city as "the key for the total settlement of traffic"<sup>17</sup>, and bicycle paths in and beyond Noorddijk. For securing accessibility for cars, it also proposes building the freeway, eastern ring road, partly semi-underground. The *wethouder* of traffic, Jacques Wallage (PvdA), took an optimistic view of national subsidies for these facilities, saying, "the designation of Groningen as growth city has

consequences"<sup>18</sup>. The Groningen division of the PvdA advocates, in the election programme of 1978, the continuation of the "Growth City" initiative, and particularly the spreading of offices integrated with residential developments:

The development of new industrial areas in connection with Groningen-Growth City (finance) will continue. Besides facilitating offices with a strong public function in and next to the inner city, the spreading of offices over the city is desirable, also in terms of the accessibility. A mixture with living is often completely possible.<sup>19</sup>

## **2.2 Plans for the central station area in the 1970s**

The Central Management of the PTT was actually located next to the central station. The GBP, which was described as "the pinnacle of the work"<sup>20</sup> of Van den Berg, indeed assumed "an concentrated service" function around the central station. While it says that the "colourfulness and interweaving of functions contributes significantly to strengthening the encounter function", it accepts that "the domination or concentration of a particular function is sometimes not only necessary for organisational or economic reasons (...), but also "a necessary evil""<sup>21</sup>. It lists three facilities that are allowed to concentrate, that is, University of Groningen in Hortusbuurt, the Academic Hospital in Binnenstad-Oost and offices around the central station.

On the other hand, the Urban Design Plan (*Stedebouwkundig Plan*, SBP), which was approved by the municipal council in May 1976 and can be regarded as the basis for the GBP, also accepts "the service sector" being placed in "larger units" around the central station. Through this, according to the SBP, the possibility emerges to realise many workplaces with minimum traffic and, particularly, parking problems. However, it adds that residential use is possible particularly on upper floors, and, concerning urban design, it says as follows:

With a building on the south side of Stationsweg, the southern edge of the inner city can be considerably improved. This is particularly the case for the station building, which is at present situated in an unsatisfactory and isolated manner, in terms of urban design. When this building is designed, not so much a freestanding building as a continuous building must be used, with the average height of three to five stories. In an incidental case, six stories can be allowed. Through this, we not only achieve an articulated wall, in terms of height, with a variable silhouette, which fits well in the building of the inner city, but also make a very intensive land use possible.<sup>22</sup>

Also judging from the fact that the SBP was published almost at the same time as the report "Growth City", it can be concluded that neither the SBP nor the GBP assumed a single, huge office building, like the PTT, around the central station. The GBP regarded the concentration of a function as a necessary evil "in consideration of keeping the quality of the surrounding area", and this consideration played, it says, an important role in designating three concentrations. In other words, it limited the areas within which those facilities could be built, so that those facilities would not undermine residential environment through penetrating into surrounding areas. That is why, for the GBP, it was absolutely unacceptable that a colossal building would rise, oppressing surrounding neighbourhoods. For example, for the northwest area<sup>23</sup> of the central station, where the PTT was actually built, the GBP allowed rather modest buildings,

designating the floor area ratio of 2.4, height of two to five stories and *korrelgrootte*<sup>24</sup> of eight metres. The election program of 1978 of the PvdA, as a matter of course, promises to observe the GBP:

What is built or rebuilt in the inner city must be examined against strict requirements of form, volume and intensity that are applied in the surroundings, such as formulated in the Broad Local Land Use Plan for the Inner City.<sup>25</sup>

### **2.3 PTT next to the central station**

However, afterwards, the municipality "correctly yielded to the pressure of the PTT"<sup>26</sup>, according to Gietema, and turned to the policy of placing the Central Management of the PTT next to the central station. The B&W published the draft of a new broad local land use plan for the station area in January 1981. Assuming PTT employees of 4,000, it accommodated the floor area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> in total, allowed the maximum height of nine stories in parts and provided parking spaces of 1,200. At the public hearing on January 13th, Gietema announced that the B&W was rather willing to place the PTT next to the central station, because it could contribute to vitalising the inner city and facilitating the use of public transport:

Gietema, supported by some civil servants, made it clear once again that the B&W was willing to have the PTT close to the inner city. In recent years, many opportunities for employment have already disappeared from the inner city, he said, and that is an unfavourable phenomenon for the liveliness of the city centre. (...) All those PTT workers do not have to come by car, because they work so close to public transport, said Gietema. That is why the *college* finds the station area so suitable.<sup>27</sup>

Residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods, who crowded the public hearing, were not satisfied with Gietema's explanation at all. They immediately organised a citizens' group, BOOS<sup>28</sup>, and started an opposition movement through collecting signatures and so on. Their criticism was directed against "such an enormous office colossus with an average of seven stories"<sup>29</sup> itself, a large amount of car traffic that it would attract and a newly built southern entrance of the station. On the other hand, they put aside the question of whether it was right or wrong to move the PTT to Groningen. Consequently, they did not advocate a particular alternative location for the PTT, but they mentioned the former plan of the municipality, Ulgersmaborg, as an example.

The local newspapers often reported the dispute, in and outside the municipal council, around placing the PTT next to the central station. In response, the Groningen division of the PvdA announced the position of the division executive in the party bulletin, *Onze Binding*, in June 1981, with the signature of Rob van Vliet. Quoting the view of the BOOS that the PTT chose the station area, which was controversial, to delay the move to Groningen, this article insists that the bottom line is which place not the PTT but the PvdA of Groningen regards as the best. In this respect, it says, the division executive and the party group have explicitly chosen the station area. The reasons are as follows:

- Placing the PTT in the station area means an impulse for the inner city. More and more businesses leave the inner city in order to find places elsewhere in an industrial area. Not only the

PTT itself but also various related service industries bring about new employment, which is very important for strengthening the multifaceted character of the inner city.

- The station area is a huge, vacant area; an attractive urban infilling of this area is very important for the city as a whole. In doing this, the interests of the residents in surrounding areas will be sufficiently taken into account.
- a large part of commuter traffic can be carried by public transport, while the accessibility for cyclists is also very good. That means: much less car use and less necessary parking spaces than in the case of locating in Ulgersmaborg.

The first reason is based on the logic that strengthening "employment function" of the inner city can contribute to its liveliness, which was often put forward by Gietema or other PvdA leaders to justify big projects in those days. However, it is rather questionable whether huge office buildings without public functions can really contribute to vitalising the inner city<sup>30</sup>. Those buildings tend to be self-sufficient, with cafeterias or stores. Most of office workers would go to their offices early in the morning before many shops open, stay inside the buildings including at lunch, and leave when many shops begin to close. Particularly the station area, where the PTT was planned, is about one kilometre from the city centre, although it is close to the inner city, and its employees have to walk through the crowded bus terminal and cross Stationsweg with heavy traffic to enter the inner city. There must be very few who bother to go to the inner city to eat lunch. At the council committee Urban Development on February 23rd, 1981, councillors Geert Otten (VVD) and Nico Broekema (CPN) voiced these doubts, responding to Gietema's explanation that the "B&W expects a substantial stimulus for the inner city from the PTT-office"<sup>31</sup>. This article of *Onze Binding* does not deal with these doubts.

The third reason, particularly the comparison with Ulgersmaborg, is also not well-founded. As mentioned earlier, the PTT in Ulgersmaborg was planned to be not an isolated development, but a part of the new town, Noorddijk, which included residential developments. The PTT employees would live in Beijum or Lewenborg, and commute by bicycle through the network of bicycle paths, or even by foot. This new town would be connected to the inner city with the exclusive bus road, Oosterhamriktracé, on which busses would be serviced every 5 minutes. In this way, with "The strong interaction between the inner city and new neighbourhoods", the inner city would be vitalised, while residents in the new town could enjoy "urban living". This is what the PvdA leaders in the 1970s had in mind. However, once the station area is chosen for the PTT, Ulgersmaborg is suddenly regarded as something like a suburban, car-oriented development. On the other hand, it is indeed reasonable to locate the PTT next to the central station, in terms of restraining car use. However, the draft local land use plan provides a large amount of parking spaces. Because the room is very limited to accommodate housing demands by the PTT employees around the central station, many of them would probably live in houses with private gardens in the suburbs, including outside the city, and commute by car. Concerning the second reason, it has to be examined whether the large PTT office building can really lead to "an

attractive urban infilling", and particularly the improvement of the isolated station building, as the SBP emphasised.

Consequently, placing the PTT next to the central station could be open to serious questions, in terms of not only its influence on the surrounding neighbourhoods but also its compatibility with the PvdA principles. However, because it is generally justifiable to strengthen "employment function" or to place offices close to public transport, objections did not come to the surface within the PvdA at this stage. Nevertheless, in *Onze Binding* in May 1981, the party group leader, Tonny van de Vondervoort, concedes that there are "party members who find that the original plans are too massive", and recommends to lower the height allowed in the south of the station or cut back the parking criterion. On June 20th, the local newspaper, *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, carried precisely the opinion about the location of the PTT of the cyclists' union, ENFB, represented by Maarten Schalijs and Marcel Bloemkolk. Both of them were PvdA members and were deeply involved in the party working group VROV later. Both, and also Van Vliet, were founder members of the Groningen division of the ENFB<sup>32</sup>, which was established in 1976, and were still more active in the ENFB rather than within the party early in the 1980s. Concerning advantages of locating the PTT next to the station, they mention, like party leaders, the impulse for the inner city or the facilitated use of public transport and bicycles, and reject Ulgersmaborg, saying, "The exodus from the city and proliferation of the surrounding villages is thus stimulated through locating in Ulgersmaborg". On the other hand, concerning disadvantages, they point out the parking criterion of one space per four workers, "precisely as the PTT wanted", and more than one exit for cars being provided. They conclude that the station area is "a good choice", but that the proposed draft of the local land use plan does not guarantee the disadvantages to be kept within "the limits".

The other left wing parties, except for the D'66 but including the CPN, which had a seat in the B&W, strongly opposed the plan of the B&W, calling it "cathedrals of the capitalism"<sup>33</sup>. On September 23rd, 1981, the municipal council approved making the draft available for public inspection, with the divided left wing B&W, in which the CPN opposed, getting support from the CDA and VVD. At the same time, the council adopted a motion that the plan should designate the historical building wall on Emmasingel as "structure line". The GBP distinguishes the building wall into three types:

- n. structure line: the line as such indicated on the plan map, where cautious replacement per building is possible, if built in this line;
- o. structure defining line: the line as such indicated on the plan map, where replacement of the building is possible, if built in this line (...);
- p. neutral line: the line as such indicated on the plan map, where structural replacement is possible, if built in this line (...)<sup>34</sup>

The SBP explains more concretely the intention of each line, and prescribes for the structure line as follows:

In by far the most of cases, this involves street- or square walls, which include a great many of monuments and whose building, even if it is not a monument, shows a great variety. In such walls, individual buildings that do not fit in with their structure can be replaced at the proper time, if this happens cautiously.<sup>35</sup>

The municipal council hoped that existing buildings there would be preserved through designating this structure line.

The conflict around the PTT between left wing parties led to the collapse of their alliance. At the municipal council meeting in October, Thewis Wits (CPN) was discharged from *wethouder* through a vote of nonconfidence proposed by the D'66, which could not accept the attitude taken by the CPN around the local land use plan. In response, the PSP as well as the CPN announced to secede from the agreement, which was made in 1978 to form the left wing B&W. In addition, at the local election in June 1982, the PvdA lost one seat, securing 15 seats, and the D'66 also lost one seat, resulting in two seats. With this result, in September, the PvdA chose to form the B&W not with other left wing parties but with the CDA, which also lost one seat but still secured seven seats. The left wing "*programcollege*" in Groningen was formed for the first time among big cities in the Netherlands in 1972, after a vote of nonconfidence against Van den Berg failed, but it came to an end abruptly in this way.

Against the draft of the local land use plan for the station area, 143 objections in total were lodged with the municipality. They were largely from residents around the central station and their organisations, but the ENFB also lodged an objection. According to it, the plan provides too many parking spaces, and the municipality misses "an excellent possibility to stimulate public transport and bicycle traffic at the expense of car traffic"<sup>36</sup>. In June 1982, the B&W announced the answers to objections and the final draft at the council committee Urban Development. Although the draft was modified in terms of the original version, residents attending the committee and nongovernment left wing parties criticised it, as before, for allowing "a massive office complex" or too many parking spaces. However, the municipal council approved this final draft, and the ENFB as well as disagreeing residents lodged objections with the province. 45 objections in total were lodged, but the *Gedeputeerde Staten* approved the plan of the municipality, only limiting parking spaces in the southwest of the station. As a result, the BOOS or ENFB turned to the Crown (king and ministers).

## **2.4 Urban design block plan**

The dispute around the PTT seemed to move to the judicial arena. However, it was brought back to the political arena by the urban design block plan<sup>37</sup>, which elaborated the local land use plan for the northwest area of the central station. Particularly, this block plan ignited the dispute within the PvdA.



At the council committee Urban Development in January 1984, the B&W announced this block plan, which was based on the design of architect Van Gool. It proposed demolishing the building wall on Emmasingel, which was designated as structure line, except for "Frascatie", in order to secure the view of the PTT toward the inner city. It also provided 200 parking spaces in the area, although the local land use plan limited parking spaces to the south of the railway line. Against this block plan, various political parties within the municipal council expressed doubts, the citizens' organisations BOOS and ENFB voiced again criticisms, and the preservation group, Bond Heemschut, also stood up as an opponent. As in the ENFB, PvdA members such as Piet Reijenga or P.L. de Vrieze played a central role in the Groningen division of the Bond Heemschut. In addition, within the PvdA itself, criticisms erupted at the working group Housing (VROV after 1985)<sup>38</sup>, and since then it had become the most active working group within the party and the main arena of disputes between *vernieuwers* centred around Gietema and *behouders*.

The working group Housing had until then dealt with almost exclusively housing issues, as its title. According to the party annual report published in November 1983, this working group met ten times for the previous year, and had 24 members, of whom six were councillors and two were division executive members. *Wethouders* Gietema and Lammert Westerhof also attended it. There were actually not so many participants at meetings, and discussion went on peacefully. However, about 30 party members came to the working group meeting on February 21st, 1984, which was dedicated to the "Theme-Evening" about the station area and announced widely through the *Onze Binding*. They criticised, first of all, the design of Van Gool for not choosing "a closed wall"<sup>39</sup>, which is characteristic of historical building walls, or for not improving the station building in terms of urban design, as the SBP called for:

In the building plan of architect Van Gool, a closed wall is not chosen on Emmasingel (Frascatie - Emmaviaduct). (...) In the past, people built closed along the ring of canals. At the same time, there must be a response in terms of urban design to the building on another bank. Here fits only a closed wall. The plan for the station area misses the connection to such surrounding areas. It is unattractive for pedestrians. Emmaviaduct brings about no improvement for cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, it is proposed to do justice to the station building (coming from Emmaviaduct/ Emmasingel) (through demolishing the buildings on the corner of Stationsplein/ Frascatie) and adjust the urban design block plan to this.

Gietema refuted squarely:

History does not always need to play a decisive role. Something contemporary is also possible. The urban structure has been absent or broken since long ago. Connecting the building on both banks each other does not need to mean that a closed wall must be chosen. A discontinuous wall can also realise a certain rhythm. The structure line enables the municipality to maintain or demolish cautiously the existing building. The municipality can require strict conditions in the negotiation. The plan improves the situation for cyclists and pedestrians (...). Also in the current situation, the view on the station is not beautiful. It is important that Frascatie keeps a function that is separated from the PTT.<sup>40</sup>

At this stage, the PTT had drastically reduced the number of the moved employees from original 4,000 to 2,700, and, as a result, notified that it would build no office in the west of Emmaviaduct. The local land use plan allowed high-rise buildings along Emmaviaduct, so that a "gate" to the inner city could emerge through building corresponding high-rise offices on both sides of the bridge. The participants in the Theme-Evening pointed out this "gate function" being lost and the necessity of modifying the parking plan in response to the reduction of employees. At the working group on March 27th, even the necessity was voiced of changing the whole plan. However, Gietema held on to the original plan, saying, "The *college* can not presuppose that less workplaces would come"<sup>41</sup>. The party group of the PvdA recognised "some discussion points"<sup>42</sup> in the block plan in the beginning. However, in May, it announced to support the plan because of its effect on the city economy, although the design was not yet satisfying:

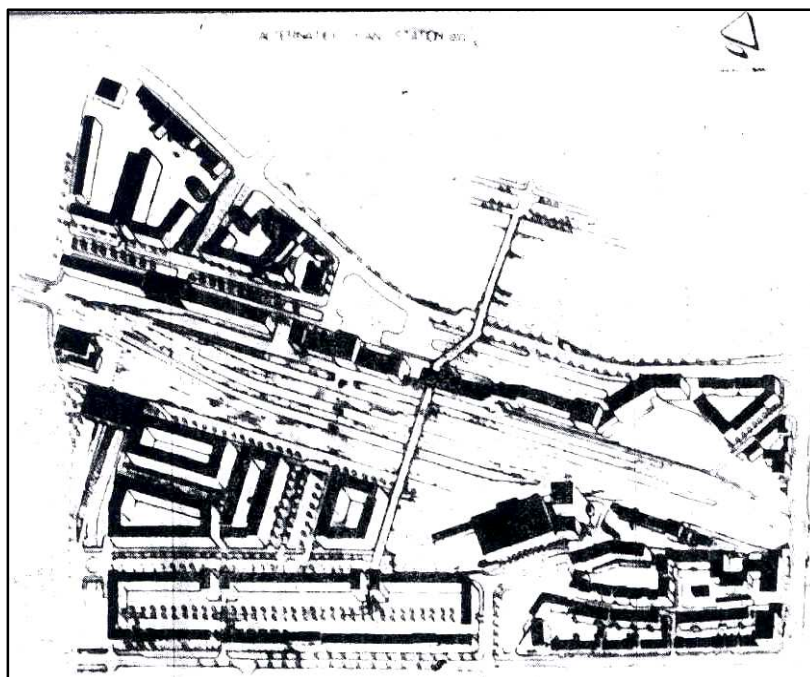
The municipal council will discuss "The Urban Design Block Plan Station Area and environs" on May 23rd, 1984<sup>43</sup>. The party group agrees with the current proposal. (...) The party group has agreed with the proposal, despite deviation from the structure line on Emmasingel, absence of the building on the western side, disappearance of the gate and difficulty around the parking situation. It has chosen a realistic principle. It is decisive that the PTT comes, and that workplaces are kept.<sup>44</sup>

As mentioned later, similarly controversial projects, such as the "Brink" or Casino, were being promoted around this time. Some PvdA members, increasingly anxious about these projects, made a motion calling for "freezing" them at the general member meeting on May 23rd. However, the next day, the municipal council approved the urban design block plan, with only the CPN, PPR and PSP opposing. At this council meeting, Wim Hendriksen (PvdA) appreciated this plan in comparison with the original design, saying, "walls on Emmasingel and Stationsplein are more substantial, while the difference of the height of the future building has been drawn much more varied", while Tom Pitstra (PSP) criticised this praise as "a poor excuse"<sup>45</sup>.

Because this urban design block plan was obviously not consistent with the local land use plan, which was approved by the municipal council in 1982, the local land use plan had to be again revised. Against the draft of the new local land use plan, objections were lodged by Dutch Railways, the BOOS, association of residents of Viaductstraat and Bond Heemschut. The Bond Heemschut warns that "its own view of the PTT toward the inner city would become a predominant presence", and finds that "the revised local land use plan is completely inconsistent with the inner city policy that Groningen has implemented since 1972". The BOOS accuses that "one of the most positive aspects of the local land use plan station and environs is clearly given up" through demolishing most of the buildings on Emmasingel. It fears that "the massive building of the PTT would threaten and shove aside the monumental station building"<sup>46</sup>.

In November, the National Government announced to cut back furthermore the move of the PTT. It turned out that 2,200 employees, that is, almost a half of the original plan,

would move to Groningen. In response, the BOOS released an alternative plan for the station area (Figure 2). According to this plan, the buildings on Emmasingel would be preserved, office buildings would take the court-yard model, which is characteristic of historical inner cities, Emmaviaduct would be turned into a tunnel, and a bridge for pedestrians and bicycles would be built over the Verbindingskanaal, running from the south of the station and leading to the inner city. At the working group VROV in January 1985, Jaap Last introduced this plan, but Gietema refused to change the course already taken, saying, "At this moment, the time is not yet ripe for a complete re-orientation"<sup>47</sup>. After this, the dispute around the station area had turned to the newly built southern entrance, which would necessitate demolishing some houses, or the possibility of equipping it with a lift for the handicapped. The plan for the northwest area of the station remained as a whole intact, and existing buildings there started to be demolished when the *Raad van State*<sup>48</sup> overruled the suspension request by the Bond Heemschut in April 1986.



**Figure 2: The alternative plan of BOOS**

(Source: Nieuwsblad, November 29th, 1984)

"Frascatie" on Emmasingel was to be preserved. However, in September 1987, a plan was put forward to demolish it also and build an office on the site, because the nearby construction work for the PTT office caused "cracks" on Frascatie, and "it became unusable and almost irreparable"<sup>49</sup>. The Bond Heemschut asked for its preservation, insisting that the caused damage should be repaired at the expense of the responsible construction firm, but the municipality approved its demolition and the PTT itself built an office here also.



(from the central station toward the west)



(the central station (front) and the PTT (right))

**Figure 3: PTT building**<sup>50</sup>

### **3. Brink and Casino**

#### **3.1 Invite the Casino**

The turnaround of the PvdA had gotten more decisively recognisable for those within and outside the party through the projects "Brink" and Holland Casino, which were planned almost side by side.

The Casino project started with the announcement by the Ministry of Justice in May 1983, which invited municipalities to apply for the fourth public casino in the Netherlands. The B&W of Groningen stood for it immediately. In June, answering questions by the GPV, which opposed the casino itself based on a religious reason, the B&W listed three reasons to invite a casino, that is, creating 200 to 300 jobs, attracting tourists and restraining illegal casinos. The municipal council meeting was held in July, which was intended to see the attitudes of political parties toward the Casino. The left wing parties CPN, PPR and PSP, as well as the GPV, opposed it, saying, "the rich cerebrate the bacchanal" or "worship of capitalism". On the other hand, the PvdA supported it as a party group, while asked cynically by other parties "how far the PvdA has drifted away from socialism when the party wants to invite such an excrescence of capitalism"<sup>51</sup>. The CDA, which formed the B&W with the PvdA, and VVD also supported the Casino, and it was found that the ample majority of the council supported it. Within the PvdA, objections were not heard at this stage when its location in the city was not yet announced.

As many as about 30 municipalities, including Groningen, turned out to apply for the fourth casino. In December, the National Foundation of Casino (NSC) decided to open the new casino in Groningen. The Nieuwsblad dated December 17th did more than just reporting this decision. It quoted "the definite conviction" of the *wethouder* of economy, Bert Barmantloo, that "it is certain that the casino, which Groningen was officially awarded yesterday, comes in the inner city". With this, for the first time and almost at the same time as the decision about the casino, it was released that the B&W had the strong intention of placing it in the inner city. In addition, the Nieuwsblad dated March 23rd, 1984, reported that "a strong favour is expressed for the location Gedempte Kattendiep/Achter de Muur" in a letter, which the B&W sent to the director of the NSC. The B&W planned to build the Casino there, and simultaneously, next to it on the former clothing factory site, develop a commercial and residential complex, Muller-complex. As a result, the possibility had abruptly emerged of huge modern buildings being built on both sides of the monument, Pepergasthuis.

#### **3.2 Residential towers**

In December 1983, ten days after Barmantloo announced that the Casino would be placed in the inner city, Gietema released the idea that it would become "a trend" in residential development in Groningen "to build higher and more luxuriously in or next to the inner city"<sup>52</sup>. He had in mind two categories of customers for this type of

housing. One is families, who moved out of the city in the 1960s, but want to return with children grown up, and another is coming several hundreds of the PTT employees. In January 1984, Gietema announced the Brink project, which he described later as "the symbol of the break of trend that I declared" or "a monument for the change of the municipal policy"<sup>53</sup>. It was just about a week after the B&W proposed the controversial urban design block plan for the station area, which included demolishing most of buildings on Emmasingel. The project was to build three "residential towers" of nine stories with 72 condominiums in total on De Brink, a corner lot between two canals, which had been vacant for more than ten years. Architect Rem Koolhaas had already worked on the design, which provided three houses per floor and enabled all houses to see canals and Martinitoren.

Because the design deviated obviously from the existing GBP, which prescribed the height of two to four stories, *korrelgrootte* of six metres and so on for the area, the local land use plan had to be revised. The B&W was quick and asked the municipal council to take the preparation decision<sup>54</sup> for it the next month, on February 15th. Various political parties doubted the demand for the condominiums. The PPR and PSP criticised the design of residential towers, in terms of comfort to live in or consistency with surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, the D'66 and GPV made a strong objection against the procedure taken by the B&W, in which a detailed plan was ready before the municipal council discussed fundamentally whether high-rise buildings had to come on this place. However, after all, the municipal council took the preparation decision, opposed by only the CPN, PSP and one of two D'66ers. Less than one month after Gietema announced, the Brink project had proceeded into an implementation stage.

### **3.3 Dispute within the PvdA**

As can be seen above, various big projects, like the Brink and Casino as well as the PTT, emerged one after another in or next to the inner city early in 1984. In response, doubts or criticisms against the PvdA leaders had more and more increased within the Groningen division. Hein Kurvers, provincial councillor of the PvdA, contributed an article to the *Onze Binding* in April 1984, in which he pointed out that the party group accepted the partial revision of the GBP per project, and that, as a result, the consistency of the inner city policy was lost. He asked for reconfirming the party principles:

December 1972 is already a good while past. The municipal council led by the PvdA approved then the document 'Objectives Inner City' Groningen. A clear choice was made for what must happen with the inner city. A choice that was elaborated in the Local Land Use Plan; a choice that was propagated by the PvdA in successive election campaigns. Nothing unclear was left.

It is now almost 12 years later, and a doubt grows whether everything is still so clear. (...)

What is worrying is that our party group makes increasingly a decision per incident, per individual project, which means to agree with the necessary revision of the Local Land Use Plan.

With this, we are running down the slope; the policy gets crumbled, the consistency lost and, what is worse, we are led by the interest that is associated with a particular project. We have lost control of the development; our own input and priorities for infilling the inner city functions recedes into

the background.

After 8 to 12 years, there can be every reason to see once again principles and objectives, and evaluate them politically.

Taking into account the increasing criticisms within the division, party leaders spared a time particularly to discuss the inner city policy at the working group Housing on May 22nd, and the general member meeting on May 23rd. At the working group meeting, Roelof Otten regards the Brink as "an example of alienating large-scale", and criticises it, using jargons in the Objectives Document or GBP:

De Brink does not provide the closure of the façade. No *herbergzaamheid*<sup>55</sup> or no proper perception value.<sup>56</sup>

It is also pointed out that those projects deal with surrounding neighbourhoods with too little care, or that the negative effects of large-scale buildings are too little explained. The next day, at the general member meeting, Kurvers and other five party members made a motion calling for "freezing" those projects:

The general member meeting of the Groningen division of the PvdA, assembled on May 23rd, 1984,

(...)

- of the opinion that scheduled decision making with regard to some inner city areas raises doubts about the question whether this is consistent with the municipal policy for the inner city that is particularly supported by the PvdA, and that therefore its postponement is justified;

Kurvers asks to adopt this motion, urging the necessity of examining projects in terms of party objectives. Former councillor Edzard Domela Nieuwenhuis also recognises the turnaround of policy in infilling inner city areas, and insists that "we must be able to judge it". According to him, "The design of the new building is disastrous. We must be ashamed of the Kattendiep plans". Reijenga, member of the Bond Heemschut, looks upon the Brink as "far too isolated building", and, concerning the Casino, raises a basic question, that is, "must socialists stimulate the casino?"<sup>57</sup>. However, members of the party group and division executive as well as Gietema strongly opposed the "freezing", and the motion was rejected.

For the Brink, the B&W chose to revise the local land use plan, with the preparation decision. On the other hand, for the Casino and Muller-complex, it tried to hasten the procedure through bypassing the revision of the local land use plan. It would immediately make a detailed urban design block plan, and issue a permit for a building application, which is against the existing local land use plan, through getting the "declaration of no objection"<sup>58</sup> by the province. In June 18th, less than one month after the "freezing" motion within the PvdA, the B&W proposed the Urban Design Block Plan Kattendiep and environs at the council committee Urban Development and Housing. It provided 350 parking spaces for the Casino, and allowed eight stories on Kattendiep and six stories on Kleine Peperstraat, while the local land use plan allowed two to five stories on both streets. Pitstra (PSP) criticises this plan as "one of the most flagrant examples of the investor politics", and demands to place the Casino not in the

city centre but in "a regional attraction point". In addition, Henk Moll (PPR) fears that "the Pepergasthuis sinks next to the huge buildings"<sup>59</sup>. For the latter, Gietema answers, on paper, that "the Pepergasthuis as monument is just strengthened through the strong contrast with high-rise buildings, which will rise on both sides"<sup>60</sup>. The municipal council approved this plan on 20th, with opposition of the CPN, PPR, PSP and GPV. According to the *Nieuwsblad* dated 21st, which reported this council meeting, Hans Jager (PvdA) behaved as the "most outspoken advocate" of the proposal of the B&W, saying, "It does not assault but rather enrich the inner city". However, PvdAer Inez Kurvers-Hummel seconded a motion with the above four opposing parties, which was made by the PSP and argued that the Casino was undesirable on the place.

While the decision making was rapidly progressing, the working group Housing and general member meeting of the PvdA dealt with again intensively those projects of the inner city after the summer vacation, in September. At the working group meeting on 11th, Kurvers complains that "The step is taken too rapidly", and asks how the Casino could contribute to "the centre function". Gietema answers that "The Casino has a urban function" "that the inner city needs", without telling concretely how it could contribute to the inner city. Although Jager was the "most outspoken advocate" at the council meeting in June, he frankly concedes at this party meeting that "It is insufficiently put forward why just the inner city needs the strengthening function"<sup>61</sup>. Jaap Last worries about the effects of the Casino on surrounding neighbourhoods, and disagrees with the Brink.

At the general member meeting on 13th, Reijenga criticises the PTT and Casino as "large-scale building without relation to the inner city". Nieuwenhuis argues that "it is no disaster that (large-scale) businesses have moved outside the city centre", and asks why the Casino is not placed in the Martinihal complex, which is next to the ring road in the south of the city. Gietema responds that, "Considering the position of the city", large-scale buildings are necessary in certain places. About placing those buildings intentionally in or next to the inner city, he, together with councillor Hendriksen, refers to the "encounter function", which has been the catchword for the PvdA inner city policy since the 1970s. They argue that "In order to acquire the encounter function, which is so desired, activities must take place in the inner city". However, it is rather doubtful whether the planned PTT or Casino could really contribute to the encounter function of the inner city, as pointed out also in the motion mentioned later. On the other hand, Kurvers worries about the current situation in which various "sketch plans" are made without fixing broad objectives, and Nieuwenhuis regards the Brink as a clear example for such an "ad-hoc policy". The general member meeting turned successively to dealing with motions, which were made on that day. After adopting the motion about the suburban commercial development<sup>62</sup>, the meeting dealt with the motion concerning the Casino, which the district team Centrum made. It argued that the effect on the inner city economy was unclear, while the negative effect on the neighbouring houses was expected, and directed the party group to conduct "a



thorough investigation" into the effect of the Casino, including a case in which it would be located outside the inner city:

The general member meeting of the Groningen division of the PvdA, assembled on September 13th, 1984,

(...)

Considers that:

- the positive effect of a casino on other economic activities, which the party group expects, rests on a presumption,
- it can be presumed that a casino will mainly attract the public after closing time of shops, during the evening and nocturnal hours,
- it can be presumed that a casino will attract the select public, who are mainly oriented toward a single visit to the casino,
- some negative effects can be expected from locating a casino on Kattendiep, such as:
  - nuisance at night for the surrounding neighbourhoods,
  - an increase of the crime in the neighbourhood Poelestraat/ Peperstraat/ Kattendiep,
  - a increased traffic load on a bottleneck in the VCP (Diepenring there) and the trace Oosterstraat/ Grote Markt (eastern side)/ St. Jansstraat,

Confirms that:

- with the current level of information, a well-considered choice is not possible for situating a casino either on Kattendiep or elsewhere within or outside the inner city,

decides: to instruct the party group to let a thorough investigation conduct into the expected effects of locating a casino: a. on Kattendiep, b. elsewhere in the inner city, c. outside the city centre,

- in addition, to instruct the party group to present the results of this investigation to the general member meeting, which will subsequently pronounce upon the most desirable location for placing a casino,<sup>63</sup>

As can be seen also in the above motion, Gietema and the party group had indicated that locating the Casino in the inner city was based on the positive judgement by the municipality. However, Barmmentloo, who stood up to answer this motion, gave this standpoint "a terrible knock". According to him, the municipality offered at first the Martinihal or Stadspark as the location of the Casino, but the Council for Casino preferred the inner city, saying, "we want to settle in the centre, near the approach roads, in the vicinity of the entertainment centre and with good opportunity for parking". "Ja, then", he says, "few possibilities are left in the inner city". On the other hands, concerning anxieties about residential environment, he concludes that there are "nothing worrying on Kattendiep"<sup>64</sup>, after "very briefly" commenting on those examples of the negative effects listed in the motion. Although party leaders made only "loose remarks", chairman Wim Klein regarded these as "excellent explanation"<sup>65</sup>, and the motion was rejected. On the day, Aakster also made a motion, which refused the Casino itself for the reason that "a casino is not compatible with the socialistic objectives", and Reijenga followed it with a motion, which asked for "a better infilling" for the Kattendiep project, because the proposed plan was "impermissible in terms of urban design"<sup>66</sup>. However, both of them were again rejected.

### **3.4 Lack of demand**

Although the leaders of the PvdA did not give way to criticisms within the party, they

were forced to modify both the Brink and Casino, in terms of the plan's content or procedure, by factors outside the party.

In October 1984, Gietema announced, concerning the Brink, to cut back the number of buildings from three to two, keeping the number of houses in total almost the same. As a result, the number of houses per floor would increase from three to four, and the height of buildings would increase from nine to ten stories. Because, "for the quite simple reason that almost no buyers could be found"<sup>67</sup>, it was inevitable to lower the selling price, that is, building cost. Through this measure, the selling price would decline from original 140,000 guilders to 123,500 guilders. Although this change might be rather simple and natural for the developer, it caused a serious problem for residents in surrounding neighbourhoods. In the beginning, three slender "towers" ought to have risen. In fact, massive "walls" would abruptly emerge, like the PTT, between the historical landscape of the inner city, represented by the Martinitoren, and their own low-rise neighbourhoods. They organised the Association De Brink and environs, and launched an opposition movement. They sent an open letter to all the political parties in the council in October. Against the argument by the municipality that "as many people as possible must enjoy the location and view" of the site, the letter argues, "the proposed plans deprive many neighbourhood residents of something that is going to be sold to others". It expresses anxieties about traffic noise, sunlight and so on, and also criticises the procedure, in which "There was no consultation with the neighbourhood"<sup>68</sup>.

In January 1985, a change of the plan was once again announced, which only irritated the neighbourhood residents furthermore. Because, although their selling price was reduced, "only a handful of buyers"<sup>69</sup> applied for the condominiums, the new plan consisted of flats to let. It increased the number of houses to 84 and raised the height to 12 stories, with two buildings. Based on this plan, the draft of the new local land use plan was made.

### **3.5 Objections from the province**

On the other hand, the municipality was forced to modify the Casino and Muller-complex, which were simultaneously being planned, by the province. The municipality asked the *Gedeputeerde Staten* to approve the Urban Design Block Plan Kattendiep and environs, which was decided by the municipal council, and to issue the declaration of no objection for the building plan of the Muller-complex. In response, the Provincial Planning Committee (PPC), an advisory committee for the *Gedeputeerde Staten*, made negative judgements on both requests in November 1984. The PPC was particularly afraid of the effect on the Pepergasthuis, saying, "This monument will be, in our point of view, 'degraded' in an unacceptable way with the large-scale infilling on both sides". It regarded this urban design block plan as fundamentally contrary to the existing local land use plan, saying, "Our conclusion is that this ambitious programme is not compatible with the spatial historical principles in

the local land use plan"<sup>70</sup>. That is why, because this plan is "too drastic"<sup>71</sup> to take exceptional measures, like the declaration of no objection, the PPC directed the municipality to go through the normal procedure of changing the local land use plan.

With this new situation, the call for reconsidering the plan intensified again within the PvdA. At the working group Housing in December 1984, Kurvers asks for the "reconsideration of the infilling" of Kattendiep. Gietema answers that the B&W does not intend to return to "the zero situation", and the party group also "finds no reason to take another way"<sup>72</sup>. At the renamed working group VROV in January 1985, Kurvers and other three submitted the "Note Kattendiep". "The situation is different now that the *Gedeputeerde Staten* did not decide", and it insists that "This moment of breathing space must lead to the reconsideration of the block plan". Although Gietema did not agree, "the majority of the working group wishes to restart the discussion of the urban design block plan", according to the minutes<sup>73</sup>. In March, the working group Harmonie announced an alternative plan for Kattendiep, "A Dynamic Inner City Policy Can Also Still Be Consistent". This working group was organised by those party members who were critical of Gietema's projects. In this document, the group at first mentions "The Problem" around recent projects, such as "demolition of Emmasingel wall, building plans Kattendiep, proposals for Reitemakersrijge"<sup>74</sup>. Those projects are promoted with "the complete absence of a consistent inner city policy", according to it, and "even no effort is made to relate those proposals with the objectives of the Local Land Use Plan". The group argues that it would propose an alternative plan based on "the central objective: 'the strengthening of the encounter function'", and, after analysing "the morphological structure" of the inner city as a whole, presents a plan for the area around Kattendiep. Concerning Kattendiep itself, the group insists on reducing its traffic function through narrowing the road way, giving up two car lanes, and proposes a "space for staying" particularly on the sunny northern side. Concerning buildings, the Pepergasthuis must be regarded as "a permanent fact". Consequently, it argues, buildings on Kattendiep should be limited to the height allowed in the existing local land use plan, and, if necessary, should transgress in some places the prescribed building line. For buildings on Kleine Peperstraat, it demands "minimum height". This alternative plan seems to be rather a painstaking work, with 14 pages and a large plan map (Figure 4). However, the next month, in April, the B&W proposed the new local land use plan, which was prepared as directed by the province, at the council committee Urban Development. This plan, concerning the Muller-complex, reduced the height of buildings from eight to six stories on Kattendiep, and from six to five stories on Kleine Peperstraat, compared with the Urban Design Block Plan.

### **3.6 Brink launched**

Planning of those projects progressed, hardly taking account of objections from within the PvdA as well as residents. At the municipal council meeting on May 23rd, projects on De Brink, Kattendiep and former Police Office, which was also controversial, were raised on the agenda at once. The B&W here proposed making available for public

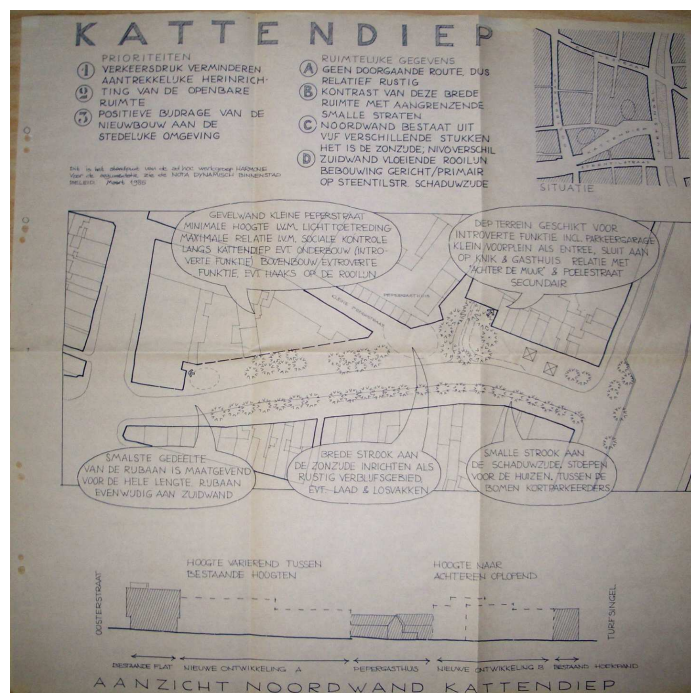


Figure 4: The alternative plan of Harmonie

inspection the drafts of the new local land use plans, which would enable these three projects. In a busy situation, where the finally discussed Brink "was rushed in an hour"<sup>75</sup>, the council approved all those proposals. Concerning the Kattendiep project, the PvdA except for Inez-Kurvers, CDA, VVD and GPV supported, and, concerning the Brink project, the PvdA, CDA and GPV supported. In other words, all those left wing parties except for the PvdA, which joined in or supported the left wing *college* in the past, opposed both of these proposals. By the end of July, when the public inspection was over, the Bond Heemschut, Kurvers and resident John Griffiths lodged objections with the municipality against the Kattendiep project, and organisations like the Association De Brink and environs and individual residents lodged eight objections in total against the Brink project.

In 1986, the Brink rushed into construction. In June, the B&W announced the answer to objections against the Brink, which declared all the objections "unfounded". According to it, "the two tower flats fit in excellently with the surrounding area in terms of the height of the buildings", and the "historic value"<sup>76</sup> of the area, which was often mentioned in the objections, is not undermined. The municipal council approved this answer, although the B&W was criticised for providing "minimum arguments"<sup>77</sup>, and the new local land use plan was approved without any change. Residents lodged a suspension request with the *Raad van State*, but it was rejected in August. On September 19th, when the "urban design day" was organised, the construction of the Brink started.



**Figure 5: Brink**

### **3.7 Illegal building**

Concerning the Kattendiep project, new issues emerged in 1986 and later. In March 1986, the detailed building plan of the Casino was announced, through which residents nearby recognised for the first time that an open garage with four to five stories would be built in their "backyard". The existing local land use plan designated the site as residential use, and prescribed a parking garage to be built underground. The residents could not recognise that the new local land use plan paved the way for the open garage, and, as a result, most of them did not lodge objections during the public inspection. The residents criticised the taken procedure with words like "misleading information", "pre-cooked plans" or "a caricature of democracy"<sup>78</sup>. They sent a letter to the municipality, and expressed their anxieties about odour or noise at the council committee meeting. However, on April 9th, after the B&W promised that it would meet the objections of residents as much as possible, the municipal council approved to declare all the objections lodged against the new local land use plan "unfounded". The new local land use plan was approved without any change. The CPN, D'66, PPR, PSP and Kurvers-Hummel of the PvdA opposed.

Early in 1987, another dispute surfaced, which was related to the agreement that the municipality would make with the pension fund ABP, which would finance the Casino and Muller-complex. The Muller-complex would consist of houses, large shops, offices and a bowling alley, and, according to this agreement, the municipality would provide various facilities in order to protect the ABP from financial risks. For example, the municipality itself would rent offices for 30 years, it would guarantee rents from shops and a bowling alley for 15 years, and it would pay for the construction cost of the garage. The B&W explained this agreement at the council committee Urban Planning on January 5th, and intended at first to propose this to the municipal council immediately on 7th. However, at the council committee, various political parties voiced doubts about the large amount of financial burdens born by the municipality,

and, as a result, the municipal council meeting was postponed for three weeks. In the meantime, not a few PvdA members also got anxious about this agreement, and, in response to the request by 21 members, the general member meeting dealt with this issue on January 22nd. The party group, answering questions from party members, assured that the municipality in fact needed offices, and shop spaces would be continuously used as such. Although they were critical about it, both the party group and division executive accepted this agreement, giving priority to realising the project, and the general member meeting approved this agreement. Also at the council meeting on 28th, the majority accepted the agreement, taking into account the importance of the project, and the Kattendiep project could start construction.

However, the issue around the parking garage still dragged on. One of the residents, Griffiths, lodged a suspension request against building the garage with the *Raad van State*. The previous year, in June, the committee local land use plan of the province pointed out the "major incorrectness"<sup>79</sup> in the noise assessment conducted by the municipality, and directed it to completely cover the garage with walls. That is why, the suspension request was likely to be adopted. The municipality decided, in June 1987, to completely cover the garage and give up parking spaces on the rooftop, while Griffiths withdrew his request. On the other hand, he had appealed to the Crown against the procedure for the new local land use plan. In December 1989, the Crown accepted his appeal and nullified the procedure. The decision clearly judged that the B&W planned the garage as secretly as possible:

not only the unclear, inaccessible format of the plan, but also the fact that the intentions to realise a large parking garage behind the casino are not spoken with so many words in the explanation led to the situation in which residents were insufficiently informed of what the municipal executive intended with this revision, and what kind of consequences it could have for the development of the related area.<sup>80</sup>

The Casino had already opened the previous year, in November 1988, and the Crown did not require its demolition. However, the Casino turned out to be branded an "illegal building".



(Casino (right)  
and Pepergasthuis  
(left))

**Figure 6: Casino**

## 4. Museum

### 4.1 Museum quarter

The construction of the new Groningen Museum was particularly controversial among projects that Gietema promoted. He himself recollects the dispute around it as follows:

I can recollect no discussion during my *wethouder* period that was held with so much emotional tension from both sides. It was as if the entire city, across political tendencies, had been divided into for and against.<sup>81</sup>

This project originated again in 1984. In September, the *wethouder* of culture, Ate Berger (CDA), announced that the municipality was planning to expand the Groningen Museum, which was located on Reitemakersrijge in those days. According to him, the new building would become a complex with residential function, and the municipality had commissioned architect Piet Blom to submit "draft sketches". He went so far as to say that "The plans for the expansion is already concrete". Gietema called this statement as "quite premature", who was subject to harsh criticisms around the Brink or Casino from in and outside his party, and tried to deny his colleague's remark, saying, "there is only a plan to see how a new infilling of the area can be realised"<sup>82</sup>.

In March 1985, an exhibition dedicated to designs of Blom was held at the Academie Minerva. At its opening ceremony on 15th, Blom presented three plans for expanding the Museum, with each plan corresponding to the extent of changing the existing buildings and streets. One of them, which Blom himself advocated and would bring about the most drastic change of the area, was to close completely Reitemakersrijge and accommodate both the museum and houses in "a amphitheatre-like building mass"<sup>83</sup>. Those present at the ceremony, among others, the residents in the surrounding area, members of the Bond Heemschut and Museum staff, particularly director Frans Haks, criticised harshly not only the plans' content but also the fact that they could not participate in planning at all. Gietema, who was present there, tried to calm their anger, emphasising that those plans were not definitive and the consultation with those concerned started just now.

Although Blom's plans, after all, came to nothing, the municipality maintained the policy of expanding the Museum on Reitemakersrijge. On March 13th, 1986, the B&W announced the draft of the new Structure Plan, which followed the Structure Plan Groningen of 1969. This draft gave the expansion of the Museum a new meaning in relation with the whole inner city policy. It argues that "The expansion must be seen in relation with the forming of a museum quarter in the western part of the inner city". Near the Groningen Museum, various museum related facilities happened to be located, such as the Tobacco Museum, Shipping Museum or Academie Minerva. In the hope that Groningen could develop as "a tourist attraction of some significance", the draft of the Structure Plan intended to "increase the identity of the existing supply"<sup>84</sup> through designating the area as the "museum quarter" and intensifying furthermore the museum



function.

#### **4.2 Aegon location**

However, in 1987, an idea surfaced to construct the new Groningen Museum outside the (original) museum quarter. At the working group VROV on January 20th, Van de Vondervoort, who had been *wethouder* of culture since 1986, explained the progress of the Museum expansion, in response to questions by the VROV members who were afraid of the historical landscape being once again undermined. With this explanation, it had become for the first time public that the B&W was examining not only the expansion of the Museum on Reitemakersrijge but also the construction of the new Museum on the "Aegon location", where a historical hospital building stood, which was used as office by the insurance company Aegon in those days. This means that the B&W began to have an ambition of making the Groningen Museum a building that could redefine the cityscape of Groningen, particularly toward outside, through locating it along the Verbindingskanaal with the central station opposite. Although the Aegon location is not so far from the existing Museum location, it is, strictly speaking, outside the museum quarter that was proposed in the draft of the Structure Plan. That is why, at the VROV meeting, Johan van de Beek regarded this location as "less desirable", criticising the lack of "the urban planning aspect"<sup>85</sup>.

The Structure Plan was approved by the municipal council in May 1987. It still included utterly the same sentences concerning the Museum as the draft, without mentioning the Aegon location. On the other hand, the same year, an unexpected financial backing came forward to realise the expansion or construction of the Museum. The gas company Gasunie, whose headquarters is in Groningen, offered a contribution of 25 million guilders for this project in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of its establishment. It was a condition for the contribution that the municipality itself should contribute 5 million guilders and the construction should start by the end of 1989.

After publishing the draft of the new Structure Plan, the municipality was elaborating it for each area. The free local newspaper, *De Groninger Gezinsbode*, dated December 18th, 1987, reported "a civil servants' advice" to the B&W, the Plan of Approach Inner City. This advice argues, as the Structure Plan, for "locating most of museums in the south-western part of the inner city of Groningen." Through this measure, it says, the area would become a "museum quarter", and "recognisability and findability"<sup>86</sup> would considerably be enlarged. Concerning the location of the Groningen Museum, it recognises the advantage of the Aegon location that "A museum there defines the view of the city toward outside". However, because this location "does not contribute to strengthening this quarter of the inner city", it chooses, in conclusion, the expansion on Reitemakersrijge, saying, "The Groningen Museum would have to remain in this quarter".



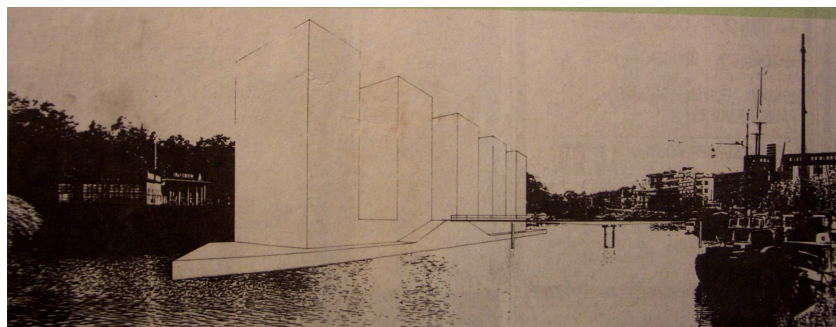
However, the draft of the Plan of Approach for the Inner City, which the B&W presented at the bar-disco "The Palace" on April 12th, 1988, refers to only the Aegon location as the location of the Museum, although it argues that "The new building of the Groningen Museum can be a significant impulse for actually developing the south-western part of the inner city into a museum quarter". According to it, "The Aegon location between Praediniussingel and Zuiderhaven is a good possibility for the new building". After all, it seems, the B&W had given priority to making a new face of Groningen, over strengthening the museum quarter. The draft itself acknowledges, "A disadvantage of the Aegon location is that it still lies near other museums in the area, but not in the heart of them". For this reason, it argues, "measures are necessary to strengthen the relationship between the new Groningen Museum and other museums", and proposes some concrete measures, such as introducing "a tourist-recreational signposting", opening "an information point" at the Museum, or providing "a cultural stroll route"<sup>87</sup> along the northern side of the Verbindingskanaal and Zuiderhaven. Against this Aegon location, although some pointed out problems, like the contradiction with the Structure Plan or the necessary demolition of the existing building, strong opposition was not apparently heard. On the other hand, almost simultaneously, just 500 meters east on the Verbindingskanaal, a much bolder plan was being proposed, in terms of redefining the cityscape of Groningen, and a heated controversy was going on around it. A few months later, the Groningen Museum turned out to be put in the middle of this controversy.

### **4.3 Marina City**

The draft of the Structure Plan, which was presented in March 1986, designated five "intensifying areas"<sup>88</sup>, in addition to "the city centre", as areas that "are regarded as not only decisive but also favourable for the desirable development of Groningen"<sup>89</sup>. The draft puts on the top of the list the area along the Verbindingskanaal, so called "Verbindingskanaal zone", where large-scale projects, such as the Brink or PTT, were already progressing, and argues for furthermore concentrating offices there. Because this zone included obviously the green Zuiderpark, which was (and still is) dotted with historical villas, residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods and preservation organisations quickly started an opposition movement. In March 1987, the B&W presented "the scenario"<sup>90</sup> for realising projects in the Verbindingskanaal zone, and in August, based on this, assigned areas within the zone to eight private developers. Each of them would work out a development plan, cooperating with civil servants and architects. In addition, architects Rem Koolhaas and Josef Paul Kleihues (from Berlin) were appointed "supervisors" for the whole development. The former would be in charge of the eastern part of the zone (to Hereweg), and the latter in charge of the western part (from the station area).

At "the public discussion evening" on September 15th, which was held at De Oosterpoort, both supervisors presented their views on the development of the Verbindingskanaal zone. According to Koolhaas, these views were "principles, a

concept and the atmosphere that must emerge", which other architects should further elaborate. While Koolhaas here advocated preserving the Zuiderpark and was "greeted enthusiastically" by the audience, Kleihues released an idea that "let more of the interested frown"<sup>91</sup>. He directed his attention to the so called "zwaaiikom", an enlarged part in the Verbindingskanaal in front of the central station. He proposed filling in this zwaaiikom and building an island, with five blocks of flats on it. The island would be connected to both banks with a pedestrian bridge. The developer Planconsult Vastgoed jumped at this idea. It made a plan, which consisted of five six-storeyed "urban villas" with 30 condominiums in total, restaurants and parking facilities (Figure 7). Furthermore, it named this island "Marina City" and invited Giorgio Grassi from Milan for the detailed design.



**Figure 7: "Marina City"**  
(Source: Gezinsbode, November 4th, 1987)

Gietema had "never tried to conceal the fact that he finds it a wonderful project", and went so far as to praise the island as "a pearl on an already beautiful lady"<sup>92</sup>. However, as a matter of course, the VROV members voiced strong doubts about it. At its meeting on September 29th, "the proposal of Kleihues for five residential towers on an island along the southern side finds no consent in the working group"<sup>93</sup>. The members feared that those buildings on the island would work, not connecting, but as a "closed wall" between both banks. Concerning the simultaneously built bridge, they regarded it as "nice", but were again afraid that the public would, after crossing the bridge, come upon "the funnel of Ubbo Emmiusstraat and a difficult crossing over Zuiderdiep". Along the "funnel", there stand large side walls of the City Department of Urban Planning and a cinema, and its width can only accommodate narrow side walks and one-way car traffic (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** "funnel"



**Figure 9:** The past view toward the zwaaiikom

(Source: Gezinsbode, November 30th, 1988)

The idea of building a bridge over the zwaaiikom had surfaced several times in Groningen in the past. It intended to create a new route from the central station, via Ubbo Emmiusstraat and Folkingestraat, to Vismarkt and beyond. As an earliest example, the Expansion Plan Groningen 1928, which was made by H.P. Berlage, proposed this bridge. However, the SBP dismisses clearly this idea. The reason is that "Ubbo Emmiusstraat is difficult to develop into an attractive pedestrian route", and that "Moreover, such a bridge causes a quite fundamental undermining of the high-quality space (water/ promenades)". The view toward the zwaaiikom consists of the water, the green on the opposite bank dotted with villas, the building wall along promenades and, beyond, towers such as Martinitoren or A-Kerk, and this view is the identity of Groningen (Figure 9). The SBP regarded it as unacceptable to build something in front of this view, even if it is a bridge. It admits that the existing route to Grote Markt, via Herestraat, is long, in comparison with routes between the stations and centres in other cities. On the other hand, it appreciates this route for having "a high perception value" thanks to the Verbindingskanaal and promenades (Figure 10). In addition, according to the SBP, it is possible "to remarkably shorten and improve" this route. It proposes concrete measures for this, like adding an eastern exit to the station or providing "a lowered pedestrian path" along the Verbindingskanaal between Herebrug and Emmabrug, which would enable pedestrians to have "visual contact with the water and ships"<sup>94</sup> (Figure 11). The GBP, based on this SBP, designated the northern area along the Verbindingskanaal, including the zwaaiikom, as the "zone A" of the "historically

valuable area"<sup>95</sup> (Figure 12). The historically valuable area has three subcategories from the zone A to C, and the strictest building regulations are applied to the zone A. The GBP defines the zone A as follows:

zone A: areas of importance because of the pattern of streets and canals, in connection with the profile and layout of the public space and the proportion and design of the building, particularly huge concentration of monuments;<sup>96</sup>

The GBP adds that the national government is preparing to designate the historically valuable area as the "protected cityscape"<sup>97</sup>.



Figure 10: Promenades



Figure 11: Along the Verbindingskanaal

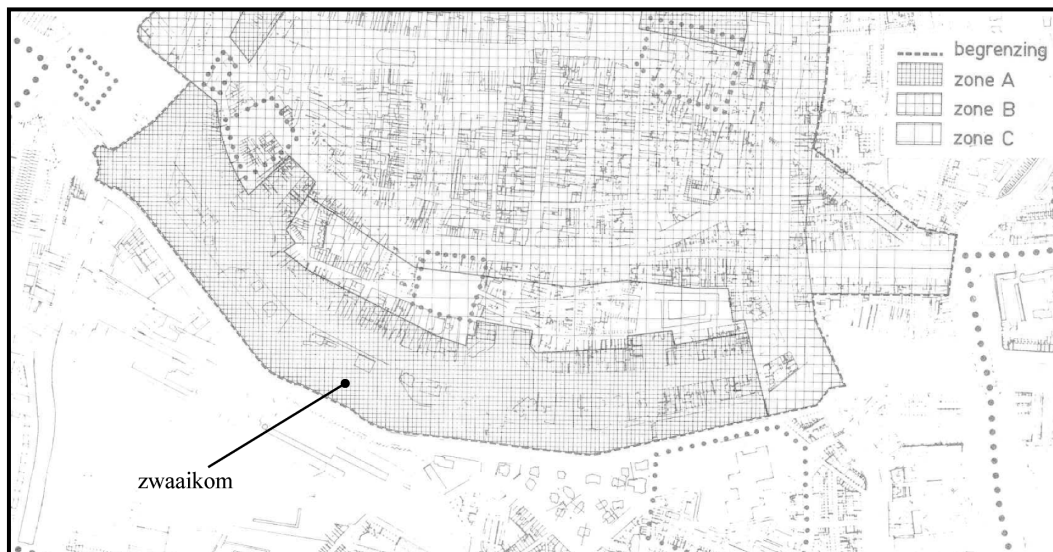


Figure 12: Historically valuable area

#### 4.4 Opposition to "Berlin wall"

The municipal *welstandscommissie*<sup>98</sup>, which had advised the B&W about various development projects based on the GBP, sent a letter to the director of City Department of Urban Planning, B. Ouwerkerk, early in November 1987. In it, the *commissie* denies the necessity of the Marina City, because "the current situation is excellently



satisfactory" and "The situation does not absolutely require huge interferences here"<sup>99</sup>. Although the liberal party, VVD, had been supportive of those projects promoted by Gietema, it made an objection to the Marina City. The VVD councillor, Otten, sent a letter to the municipal project group Verbindingskanaal zone in November, in which he pointed out the importance of keeping the zwaaikom as a large expanse of the water:

The large width of the water, as well as the distance of the building on the station side, provides beautiful views, seen not only from the promenade but also from the station area. Buildings on an island undermine this beautiful views.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, among the public, an extensive opposition movement had emerged, involving far more than the directly interested, such as the residents nearby. In November, it was decided to establish "an association" whose slogan was "No Berlin Wall"<sup>101</sup>. When the Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape was officially established in January 1988, more than 200 citizens had already expressed their support or applied for the membership of it. "The temporary executive"<sup>102</sup> of this association included the VVD member and lawyer, J. van Zaaiken (chairman), as well as the PvdA member, Kurvers, who had consistently criticised Gietema's policy at the VROV. Van Zaaiken predicted that the beautiful view from the central station would be completely destroyed if the Marina City were realised:

That plan must not proceed. Concerning the character of the promenade area, particularly Ubbo Emmiusingel, nothing will be left. It is still beautiful when you go out the station and see the monumental buildings along the promenades. That beautiful view will completely disappear if those plans proceed.<sup>103</sup>

In addition, the Association pointed out the fact that the municipality had applied to the national government for the designation of the promenade area, including the Verbindingskanaal, as the "protected cityscape" a few years before. The construction of the Marina City was, according to the Association, contrary to this policy.

Along the Verbindingskanaal in those days, although the development of Zuiderpark was given up, several projects besides the Marina City were being promoted, such as the widening of roads that would necessitate the demolition of residential neighbourhoods ("Kop"(head) of) Oosterpoortbuurt and Bij de Sluis. Neighbourhood organisations were opposing these projects in each area. The day after the Association was established, nine organisations, that is, these neighbourhood organisations, the Association and other interested organisations, such as the Royal Rowing Club De Hunze and Groningen Motorboat Club, both of which would be forced to evacuate the zwaaikom if the island were built, met to talk about "joint actions"<sup>104</sup>. Their criticisms there were directed toward not only the content of each project, but also the opportunities for public participation that the municipality had provided. Concerning the development of the Verbindingskanaal zone, the municipality had arranged public meetings three times, where plans were presented and discussed. That is, on September 15th, 1987, when Koolhaas and Kleihues presented their ideas, on November 2nd for the interim report and on December 2nd for the final presentation. The Nieuwsblad

praised this procedure as "the "open" procedure that is quite unique for the Netherlands". However, for example, it was reported that the final presentation was attended by as many as "almost 700 people"<sup>105</sup>. It must have been impossible to discuss plans substantially with so many participants.

Based on the result of this procedure, the B&W prepared the Concept Structure Vision Zone Verbindingskanaal, and made it available for public inspection from May 9th. It scheduled public hearings about this for May 16th and 17th, and the public could lodge objections by 19th. This Vision included "several thousands square metres of shopping areas, 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> office space" or "about 300 houses", and proposed, as one of "some striking redevelopment projects", "a combination of bridge/ island/ houses"<sup>106</sup> in the zwaaikom. In the face of this situation, opposition movements expanded furthermore their cooperation, and established the Broad Consultation Verbindingskanaal (BOV) that consisted of 13 organisations. It argued, "the plan to build five residential flats on an island in the Verbindingskanaal must be waved aside", because "The character of the promenade area will be seriously undermined if the plans proceed". In addition, "the municipality has provided the residents of the city with almost no possibility for participation", according to joining organisations, and they decided to engage themselves in "forcing optimum participation"<sup>107</sup>. The BOV took joint action in the Verbindingskanaal on what it called, the "Day of Verbindingskanaal", that is, May 7th. It guided 17 councillors, who accepted an invitation, to each project site by a round-trip boat, and provided opportunities for neighbourhood organisations to talk directly to councillors. The BOV particularly paid attention to the island project on this day, and showed the area of the planned island by placing ships side by side, so that the public as well as politicians could understand the huge impact of this project.

#### **4.5 Island-museum**

When the Concept Structure Vision was made available for public inspection, Dutch Railways joined in the opposition camp as "formidable obstruction". This objection again originated from the fear that the view from the station would be completely destroyed:

The view from the station to the towers of the city has been quite deliberately protected in the past. This aspect is very important in terms of urban design, and it was also taken into account when the area was planted in the framework of the recent reconstruction. This free view will be wiped out by the proposed building. In addition, the new pedestrian route does not fit the implemented reconstruction plan, and would necessitate its huge adjustment.<sup>108</sup>

In addition, the CDA, which formed the B&W with the PvdA, opposed consistently the island project, and the party group of the PvdA itself could not clearly stand by the PvdA *wethouders*. With this political situation, in which the island project turned out to be very difficult to realise, the B&W sent to each councillor a final proposal for the development of the Verbindingskanaal zone early in July. In this, the B&W announces that it will not take the plan to build flats on the island as "starting point" any longer. This plan "did not convince us either", it says. However, it holds on to the plan of not

only building a pedestrian and bicycle bridge, but also developing an island, saying, "an island in the Verbindingskanaal is in itself not necessarily incompatible with the existing environment and can also add substantial value to it"<sup>109</sup>. As the condition for achieving this, it argues, not "private housing" but "a building with a public function"<sup>110</sup> has to be built on the island. For the people in Groningen, this condition meant that the B&W began to take into consideration the Groningen Museum as a building on the island. This idea of the "island-museum" had been circulated, as an alternative to the flats on the island, since Kleihues released his idea. For example, as early as in October 1987, architects of Groningen, Otto Das and Johannes Moehrlein, made a plan of the island-museum, which consisted of five buildings and was connected to both banks with a bridge, like Kleihues's idea, and the Gezinsbode gave it an extensive coverage with its perspective. They explain later the reason for making this plan as follows:

In the beginning, there was a plan of supervisor Kleihues to build five residential towers on an island in the Verbindingskanaal. But few were really happy with this proposal. Furthermore, we found that such a prominent place in the city is involved that you cannot build flats there, from which few profit. We found that a facility must come, which everyone can use.<sup>111</sup>

While the Nieuwsblad dated July 5th, 1988, reported the B&W's decision of giving up the flats on the island, it reported rather more precisely issues around the Groningen Museum, concluding that the island had become "a serious candidate-location" for it. The Gezinsbode dated July 8th also reported, "The place (island - by the author) is already mentioned as a possible location for the new Groningen Museum". However, because the CDA kept to the original position that "the historical value of this area must be left intact"<sup>112</sup>, the Gezinsbode put a headline "New museum on island in canal almost given up" as early as on 22nd. In fact, the B&W pressed on to the island museum after the summer vacation.

#### **4.6 Redefine the image of Groningen**

The Nieuwsblad dated September 24th reported conclusively, "The new Groningen Museum comes on an reclaimed island in the Verbindingskanaal". The reason is that "The party group of the PvdA, which is almost supreme in the municipal council with 18 of 39 seats, has already in principle chosen with the *college van B. en W.* this curious location (the island - by the author)". It also reported that the director of the Museum, Haks, was lobbying for Alessandro Mendini as architect for the new Museum. The Groningen Museum held an exhibition of his design from October 1st. Faced with a sudden progress, the Gezinsbode, which voiced doubts also about the flats on the island, raised serious questions of the island museum on September 28th:

What is wrong with the Verbindingskanaal between Herebrug and Emmabrug? In other words: why must an island with building come at all costs in one of the most beautiful parts of the canal that still enriches the city of Groningen?

Although the proponents of the island-museum argued, "the relation would must be improved between the building of the Verbindingskanaal zone and the inner city", this

article advocates, like the SBP, that the existing route should be improved through providing "an attractive stroll boulevard " along the Verbindingskanaal:

The accessibility and human dimension of the area (Verbindingskanaal zone - by the author) could be even still significantly strengthened through providing Stationsweg or Emmasingel, between Herebrug and Emmabrug, on the water side with an attractive stroll boulevard. With this, the stroll route from the central station to the inner city can still become significantly more attractive, precisely thanks to the presence of the open space of the Verbindingskanaal.

In addition, it reminds that, until just a few months ago, "the residential towers of architect Grassi here, who was drummed up all the way from Italy, were regarded as the highest wisdom by some municipal executives", and finds the procedure too hasty for dealing with "the beautiful open spaces, which belong to the most desirable characteristics of the city". Finally it asks itself again, "what is now wrong with the Verbindingskanaal?", and answers, "Surely, nothing".

The B&W intended to decide the proposal to the municipal council about the location of the new Museum at a regular meeting on October 18th. In response, the previous day, the division executive of the CDA visited its party group meeting, and made a request for adhering to opposition to the island-museum. According to the CDA executive, the plan "is inconsistent with the historically defined view of the water and promenades"<sup>113</sup>. Although the executive recommended Stadspark as an alternative location, the party group chose Westerhaven, which was opposite to the existing Museum across a canal. The party group demanded that the B&W should refer to more than one location, including Westerhaven, in the proposal to the council, even if it would after all recommend a particular location. The B&W meeting on October 18th only approved this demand of the CDA, without deciding its proposal.

On the other hand, within the PvdA, since Van de Vondervoort explained in January 1987, issues around the museum had hardly been discussed, until party members were informed of the choice of the B&W, ex post fact, at the VROV meeting on October 18th, 1988, that is, the same day as the above B&W meeting. At this VROV meeting, a note "Location Choice Museum" was handed out, which was dated October 11th and signed by Van de Vondervoort and Gietema. According to this note, it has become clear that the Aegon location, where the new Museum has been planned, has "two serious difficulties". One is that the Aegon location is subject to the "servitude" of residents in the northern side of Praediniussingel. It is necessary to revise the local land use plan there in order to expropriate their servitude, and it would take "a few years" for this, says the note. Another difficulty is that, because Aegon offers a high selling price, "The Aegon location is probably very expensive", with also the cost to prepare the site added. That is why the B&W "searched for some alternative locations", and the most important among them are, according to the note:

- Verbindingskanaal, zwaairom opposite to Hunzehuys
- Reitemakersrijge (current location)
- Westerhaven near museumbrug
- Noorderplantsoen (north, middle and south)



- Stadspark
- Hoornsemeer

Immediately after this list, that is, without any reason, the note tells that the B&W has decided to investigate in detail the Verbindingskanaal among the inner city locations, and Stadspark among the non-inner city locations. Furthermore, without mentioning the result of this investigation, the note immediately introduces the choice of the B&W, that is, "Within the *college*, there is an obvious preference for the location in the Verbindingskanaal". The reason is that "this location, in the first place, excellently fits in with our inner city policy", "but moreover", it says as follows:

but moreover, we are of the opinion that a museum in the zwaaikom would have a magnificent aura, surely if it is designed as an contemporary architectural monument. Coming from the station and driving along the Verbindingskanaal, the museum would be an inescapable fact in this place.

Based on this choice, according to this note, "political consultation" is already taking place to obtain support in the municipal council, and, as mentioned earlier, the B&W will decide on the location on October 18th, the day of this VROV meeting.

In response to this note, the VROV members voiced many criticisms because of "poor foundations", and asked, for example, to clarify the criteria based on which locations were chosen. Gietema conceded that information was indeed insufficient, and proposed "an extra working group meeting based on more thorough information"<sup>114</sup>. However, without such a meeting being arranged, the B&W decided the proposal to the council on November 1st, which mentioned the Aegon location, Stadspark and Westerhaven, as the CDA demanded, but rejected them, and designated the zwaaikom as the location of the new Museum. The CDA wethouder Bert Westerink opposed this proposal<sup>115</sup>. According to this proposal, the reason that the B&W has chosen the zwaaikom is "because, in this place, all functions of the museum can be well expressed, and because of the strengthening effect that it has on the aura and image of the city"<sup>116</sup>.

As advantages of the zwaaikom, besides this reason, it had been pointed out that, particularly in comparison with the Aegon location, the Museum could be built at reasonable cost and smoothly, the location is consistent with the inner city policy, or the Museum there can contribute toward vitalising the inner city. However, these reasons are not convincing in particularly recommending the zwaaikom. Concerning the construction cost, the B&W itself admitted that Stadspark was much cheaper than the zwaaikom, and Westerhaven was almost the same. In addition, the Gezinsbode dated November 14th revealed a document circulated within the preparation committee, which consisted of the municipality, Gasunie and the Groningen Museum. According to this document, if the Museum is built in the zwaaikom, the municipality will have to pay 2.5 million guilders more in addition to the originally estimated 6 million guilders, which was still mentioned in the proposal to the council. This expense will pay for reclaiming the island, moving De Hunze and Groningen Motorboat Club, building a bridge, and so on, and does not include the 5 million contribution that was required by

Gasunie. The Aegon location had been said to cost "6.5 to 8 million". "With this", says the Gezinsbode, "the zwaaikom location becomes then at a stroke the most expensive possibility to place a new museum".

In terms of the smoothness or easiness of construction, it must have been easiest to build the new Museum in the middle of the large park, Stadspark. Although the B&W emphasised that the Aegon location was subject to servitude, the situation seems the same with the zwaaikom, which similarly lies in the northern side of the Verbindingskanaal. In fact, the Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape argued that building the new Museum in the zwaaikom would undermine the servitude of residents on Ubbo Emmiusingel. Moreover, although there was, at least apparently, no opposition movement against the Aegon location, an extensive and strong objection had been raised to the flats on the island. Even if the flats were changed into the Museum, a persistent opposition by, for example, the Association could be expected, which could lead to the substantial delay of construction.

The Nieuwsblad dated September 24th, 1988, justified the Museum in the zwaaikom in terms of the inner city policy promoted by the municipality:

The choice of the B&W and the PvdA to build the new Groningen Museum on an island in the Verbindingskanaal completely fits in with the effort of the municipal executive to make a museum quarter in the south-western part of the inner city.

However, even the Aegon location is outside the original museum quarter, and the zwaaikom is farther from the existing concentration of museum-related facilities. That is why, the final version of the Plan of Approach for the Inner City, which was decided in 1990, argues, assuming the new Museum in the zwaaikom, that "measures are necessary to strengthen the relationship between the new Groningen Museum and other museums", like its draft in 1988, which assumed the Aegon location. However, although the location is different, the proposed concrete measures are utterly the same as those in the draft, such as introducing "a tourist-recreational signposting"<sup>117</sup> and so on. This casts doubts on the priority or seriousness of the B&W about creating the museum quarter.

It ought not to be essential to locate the Museum in front of the central station in order to attract visitors there into the inner city. The same effect could be expected from the Museum in Westerhaven and the Aegon location. Even Stadspark is at most two kilometres from the inner city, although opposite to it across the railway line. In terms of vitalising the inner city, the positive effect of the simultaneously built bridge has also been pointed out. For example, Gietema tells, "The bridge connection considerably shortens the pedestrian and bicycle route from the station to the heart of the city"<sup>118</sup>. However, the physical distance to Grote Markt, which is generally regarded as the heart of the city, is the same, whether we take the route via this bridge, or the existing route via Herestraat. More importantly, it is by no means essential for those who visit the inner city to enjoy it whether the approach to it is direct or not.

Essential is that the approach is enjoyable, comfortable and attractive. On the other hand, it was expected that this bridge would significantly increase pedestrians on streets following the bridge, that is, Ubbo Emmiusstraat and Folkingestraat, and shopkeepers there welcomed enthusiastically this bridge as well as the Museum in the zwaaikom. However, when Alex Scheybeler and fellows, alleged to represent "an group of residents and employers" of "the southern inner city", conducted a campaign to collect signatures for the new Museum, the shopkeepers' association on Zuiderdiep distanced itself from this campaign, calling it "over-simplified"<sup>119</sup>. Because Herestraat and Stationsstraat were contrarily expected to suffer the decrease in pedestrians. That is why, the Chamber of Commerce opposed squarely the construction of the bridge, at least when the flats were being proposed on the island:

the most logical and attractive pedestrian route to the inner city is the route via Herestraat. The policy has to be directed toward maintaining this route and, if possible, improving its attractiveness.<sup>120</sup>

In addition, wishes of shopkeepers are not necessarily the same as those of residents. Although the Nieuwsblad, quoting the statement by Scheybeler, reported that "Residents of the neighbourhood between promenades and Zuiderdiep are enthusiastic"<sup>121</sup> even when the flats were being proposed, the Gezinsbode carried a voice of a resident, who had lived on Ubbo Emmiusstraat for 36 years:

Let them place that museum in Stadspark. Then, we will not have all the bustle in front of the door. This has been a fairly quiet street until now. As long as I and some other residents are concerned, they must maintain this as such.<sup>122</sup>

After all, the reason for particularly choosing the zwaaikom, which still remains as convincing, and which seems to have been the most important for the B&W, is the strengthening of the "image" of Groningen, an aim that had been cherished since the new Museum came forward to the Aegon location. In other words, creating a new face that could redefine the image of Groningen toward outside. In the beginning, the flats on the island ought to have played a leading role in strengthening the image. Immediately after this idea turned out to be politically impossible to realise, the Museum, which was originally intended to play a supporting role, was promoted to a leading role. Flats and a museum are utterly different facilities. However, in terms of strengthening the image, it does not matter whether flats or a museum are built. The point is that "it is designed as an contemporary architectural monument". That is why, the B&W could switch to the Museum only a few months after it gave up the flats on the island. The B&W also acknowledged that the zwaaikom was "one of the most beautiful places"<sup>123</sup> in Groningen. However, it thought that a "high-quality"<sup>124</sup> building there could add "substantial value", and strengthen the image of Groningen. The Nieuwsblad carried the pros and cons of the island-museum every few days until the decision by the municipal council after the B&W decided its proposal. On November 19th, the member of *Gedeputeerde Staten*, Roel Vos (PvdA), advocated the standpoint of the B&W in this serial. He argued that the Museum in the zwaaikom would become "a new recognition point":

That will become a new recognition point (...). Many people who do not live here know this city only by Martinitoren, Grote Markt, Herestraat and A-kerkhof, as if nothing had happened any more since the invention of the ancient Monopoly-game. No other places are so suitable to convince everyone of the contrary as the zwaaiikom in the Verbindingskanaal.

#### **4.7 Principle-decision**

However, it ought to have been the essence of the GBP, in whose preparation Vos himself was deeply involved as municipal civil servant in the 1970s, that the historically formed cityscape, consisting of Martinitoren or Grote Markt, had to be respected as the identity of Groningen, without dismissing it as obsolete. Moreover, this was the central argument of the New Left activists, who advanced into the municipal council early in the 1970s and shelved existing development projects. Particularly, the landscape toward the zwaaiikom was representative for Groningen, and many citizens, including the conservative or liberal, feared that building something large here would, far from strengthening, irrevocably destroy the image of Groningen. That is why, although what was built on the island was changed from the flats to the Museum, the intensity of opposition did not weaken. The above mentioned serial in the Nieuwsblad, on November 3rd, carried an opinion of the VROV member, Reijenga. He argues that the island-museum would lead to "a thorough undermining of the spatially defining water surface". Concerning the opinion that the island-museum "marks" the entrance to the inner city for strangers, he insists that the inner city is already clearly recognisable in the existing situation, saying, "The canal follows the trace of the former moat, and you must be so stupid not to understand that the city lies in the inner side of this bend". On 10th, again the VROV member, Van de Beek, appeared in this serial. He states that the municipality must build something, not on "a beautiful place", but "a poor place", so that "a value in terms of urban design" can be added. He also points out the contradiction with the Plan of Approach:

By choosing the zwaaiikom, the *college* deviates from its own Plan of Approach for the Inner City (April '88). In it, some quarters are advocated, particularly a museum quarter.

The Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape, which was established in response to the flats on the island, continued to oppose. It insisted, "a building in the zwaaiikom leads to an unacceptable undermining of the historical cityscape". It sent a letter to the municipal council, demanding to reject the proposal of the B&W, and showed off the preparedness to carry this issue into the courtroom. It advocated Stadspark as an alternative location, because of "the good accessibility, the available parking space, the possibility of a field museum and the room for the future expansion"<sup>125</sup>. Furthermore, the Nieuwsblad organised a questionnaire survey for Groningen citizens about the location of the new Museum, and published the result on November 24th. According to this, 54.6% of the respondents opposed the island-museum, and only 12.6% supported it<sup>126</sup>. Among the PvdA constituency, 58.4% opposed the island-museum, and 11.9% supported it. Even among the VVD constituency, as much as 50% opposed and 26.7% supported.

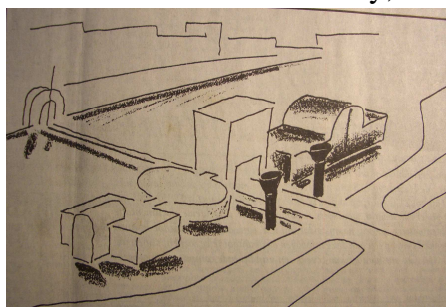
On the other hand, within the municipal council, a substantial change in opinion had appeared as a result of the switch from the flats to the Museum. Although the CDA opposed the island-museum, recommending Westerhaven, the PvdA supported it. However, two among 18 PvdA councillors, Inez-Kurvers and Fré Mulder, opposed. The D'66 (2 councillors) also supported the island museum, because "it is of the utterly different nature than the residential towers of Grassi"<sup>127</sup>. In addition, the VVD (5) made "a remarkable turnaround"<sup>128</sup>. In July, when the B&W announced a final proposal for the Verbindingskanaal zone, it insisted on "no island that undermines the cityscape, compels the water sport to move and impedes seriously navigation"<sup>129</sup>. However, at the municipal council committees on November 16th, it expressed the support for the island-museum. Because the VVD party group made this turnaround without consulting the party committees, "a huge turmoil"<sup>130</sup> emerged among its constituency. In the meantime, the Gezinsbode criticised the B&W for steering toward the island-museum "with too hasty speed"<sup>131</sup>, with many questions unanswered. On November 29th, the day before the municipal council discussed the proposal of the B&W, the Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape demanded with a letter that the council should postpone its decision, because "the *college van B. en W.* has not been able to provide sufficient understanding of the form and dimension of the new museum complex"<sup>132</sup>. Nevertheless, on 30th, the municipal council made a "historical decision"<sup>133</sup>, approving the proposal of the B&W of building the island-museum in the zwaaikom, with the support of the above three parties. However, this decision was regarded as a "principle-decision", based on the demand by the VVD. That is, the municipal council was guaranteed the opportunity to decide "definitively" the museum location when a detailed urban design plan was prepared for the island-museum. Sufficient public participation in this plan was also a condition that the VVD made in exchange for supporting the island-museum. In December, soon after Groningen got on, despite the principle-decision, "a train that will be difficult to bring to a standstill"<sup>134</sup>, the preparation committee decided to cut back the floor area of the new Museum in order to reduce the building cost. In addition, it gave up the condition imposed by Gasunie in the beginning that the construction should start by the end of 1989, and rescheduled the start of the construction for the end of June 1990. It also officially appointed Mendini chief architect, who had already worked on the design of the Museum.

#### **4.8 Definitive decision**

In January 30th, 1989, the draft of the Urban Design Plan Museum Verbindingskanaal was presented at the joint council committees Culture and Urban Planning. This draft allowed the maximum height in the south of the zwaaikom, and required "clear openings" in the building to maintain "sightlines"<sup>135</sup> between both banks. The committees decided to make this draft available for public inspection for one month.

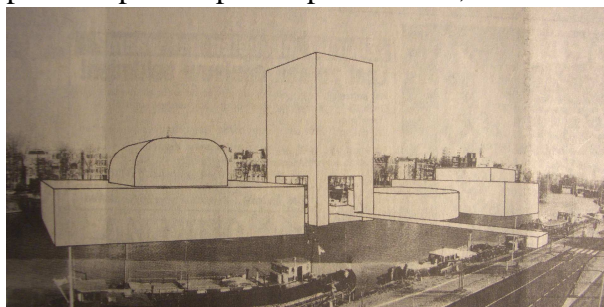
The draft was made available for public inspection at three places until March 4th, and the public could lodge objections during this period. In addition, the Groningen

Museum exhibited a model for this draft, sketches drawn by Mendini (Figure 13) and "an audio-visual programme". The municipality held public meetings on February 14th and 21st. The first meeting was "particularly for informing", and the second one was "particularly for your reactions"<sup>136</sup>. The VVD, which demanded public participation, appreciated these arrangements, saying, "the *college* has completely met our demand for participation"<sup>137</sup>. However, these were absolutely insufficient for citizens who opposed the island-museum. First of all, the municipal council chose the form of "principle-decision", because it supposed that both the councillors and public could not make a definitive judgement without having a concrete image of the island-museum in the *zwaaiikom*. That is why, the purpose of public participation was, as Van de



**Figure 13: One of sketches by Mendini**

(Source: Gezinsbode, February 3rd, 1989)



**Figure 14: The perspective by BOV**  
(Source: Gezinsbode, February 20th, 1989)

Vondervoort said, for the public "to form a good image of how it could look like"<sup>138</sup>. However, the Urban Design Plan was, not the building plan, but just "prerequisites that the museum building and new cross-canal connection must meet"<sup>139</sup>, as the municipality explained. Mendini indeed showed the image with sketches, but these were for three utterly different ideas, and all were intended to be just temporary. Gietema himself emphasised, "an actual design of the museum is not the subject of discussion at all yet"<sup>140</sup>. Moreover, these sketches were pointed out not to meet the conditions prescribed in the Urban Design Plan<sup>141</sup>. Although a model, with the *zwaaiikom* and environs, was exhibited on a scale of 1:500, it was difficult to image the building, as seen on the ground. That is why, the BOV, which planned to carry on "an its own information campaign"<sup>142</sup> during the period of participation, tried to take a picture of this model with a "*viascoop*" and produce a video of the landscape on the ground. However, while the B&W granted 500 guilders for this campaign, saying, "the BOV has nice ideas about how the plans can be made visible"<sup>143</sup>, it did not allow the BOV to use the model for producing the video. As the next best thing, the BOV drew a perspective with the viewpoint on the ground, based on the model or sketches by Mendini, and published it (Figure 14). The municipality dismissed this as incorrect, but did not present a correct perspective. After all, through arranged participation opportunities, "it remained unclear what kind of building masses Groningen soon comes up against", and the discussion turned out to be "extremely unfruitful"<sup>144</sup> for opposing citizens. After the period of participation, the Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape and, later, the BOV lodged "Plaints"<sup>145</sup> with the B&W, pointing out the insufficiency of participation, particularly "visualisation".

Because a concrete image was not presented, which could wipe out the anxiety about the island-museum, opposition to it did not decline. During participation, many criticisms were put forward of the sightlines between both banks being obstructed. The BOV also lodged a detailed and wide-ranging objection. According to this, the zwaaikom was intentionally created for the effect on the cityscape, based on the expansion plan of Groningen that Brouwer made at the end of the 19th century, when the city walls were dismantled. Thanks to this expansive open space, people could enjoy a panoramic view of the old city of Groningen from the central station. The "transparency", which was stipulated in the Urban Design Plan, guarantees "only thin views", argues the BOV. It dismisses the idea of creating a new axis with the bridge, running from the central station. Because the existing axis finds "its natural end" in the promenade. Its extension terminates with, not the monumental station building, but the wall of the newly built bicycle shed, definitely not giving the existing axis "a higher aesthetic value". The BOV is critical about this planned new axis also as a pedestrian and bicycle route to the city centre, because it has "the most difficult points" of "the long wall of the old building of the Department Urban Planning on Ubbo Emmiusstraat and the crossing (on Folkingestraat) with the red-light district"<sup>146</sup>. In addition, immediately after the period of participation, the Institute for Contract Research of Hanzehogeschool, commissioned by the BOV, organised again a questionnaire survey for 600 citizens. The result revealed that 59.1% still opposed "any intervention in the zwaaikom".

Taking into account the result of public participation, the B&W revised the Urban Design Plan, increasing the transparency and lowering the height. In addition, at the request of the provincial and national departments of transport and public works, it moved the building line in the south 5 metres north for navigation. Based on this revision, Mendini made a new design in "exactly one week"<sup>147</sup>, and personally presented it at the municipal council committees on March 22nd. This design secured the transparency through dividing the Museum into four buildings and creating the "view zones"<sup>148</sup> in between, and cut back the height of the buildings, except for the tower with a height of 30 metres. However, the BOV again drew and published a perspective for this new design, and continued its opposition, particularly fearing that the bridges connecting separate buildings each other would seriously undermine the transparency. In addition, with the definitive decision by the municipal council close at hand, opposition within the VVD came to the surface. Those opponents raised an objection, in an open letter, to their own party group that supported the island-museum, and argued, based on the questionnaire survey by the BOV, that "certainly 70 percent" of the VVD constituency opposed it. Councillor Otten regarded this action as "an attack from behind made by a small group", and insisted, "We would not change our standpoint for this sort of blackmail"<sup>149</sup>. On April 5th, the municipal council approved the Urban Design Plan for the island-museum, with the support of the PvdA (except for the same two councillors as before), D'66 and VVD, and decided definitively to place the new Museum in the zwaaikom.

#### 4.9 Delayed construction

The new design of Mendini led to again the increase of the building cost, and the municipality had to look for another financial source. These problems caused further delay of the schedule. According to the original schedule, the municipal council should have approved the new local land use plan, which enabled the island-museum, in the middle of November 1989. In fact, it approved the plan on August 29th, 1990<sup>150</sup>, that is, after the devastating election for the VVD as well as the PvdA in March 1990. Against this local land use plan, the Bond Heemschut, Association for Preservation of a Precious Cityscape and three individuals lodged objections with the Crown. The municipality planned to start the construction before these objections were settled through getting the "declaration of no objection" by the province, and optimistically scheduled the start of the construction for January 1991. In response, the Association chairman, Zaaijen, lodged a suspension request with the *Raad van State*. The *Raad van State*, surprisingly for the municipality, accepted this request on January 31st, 1991. There were three reasons:

the interference with the cityscape is too substantial to build in advance through a so-called accelerating article 19-procedure; so many objections were lodged and the procedure related to the local land use plan is pending with the Crown.<sup>151</sup>

After all, the *Raad van State* rejected all those objections and approved the local land use plan in February 1992. Successively, it rejected the suspension request again lodged by the Association in April, when the construction of the island-museum was finally launched. Early in April, Gietema had already resigned as *wethouder* for the reason that he would take responsibility for the scandal around the municipal Groningen Credit Bank.



(a pedestrian and bicycle bridge)

Figure 15: Groningen Museum



## **5. Conclusion**

We have seen some projects that were promoted under *wethouder* Gietema in Groningen in the 1980s. As opposing citizens pointed out repeatedly, opportunities for public participation were insufficient, as in the 1970s. On the other hand, the plans in the 1970s were consistent with the frameworks of the PvdA, through which public opinions could be indirectly integrated. However, the projects in the 1980s were substantially doubtful in terms of the consistency with these party frameworks, such as the Objectives Document, and clearly contrary to the SBP or GBP, which was intended to guarantee the frameworks. As a result, those projects incurred strong objections of *behouders*, who still cherished their party frameworks originating from the 1970s. In addition, the island-museum was not only contrary to the PvdA frameworks, but also controversial even in terms of the conservative or liberal frameworks, which are generally more tolerant of urban development.

To deviate from the frameworks created in the past is not a problem in itself. The frameworks of political parties should be renewed reflecting the times. Essential for democracy is whether *vernieuwers*, as the name suggests, worked on renewing the party frameworks. The Groningen division of the PvdA prepared election programmes in 1982, 1986 and 1990, and the municipal council, with the PvdA dominant, approved the new Structure Plan in 1987. The point is whether these documents clearly presented new principles that justified individual projects, and whether active intra-party discussion to substantiate these documents was maintained as in the 1970s. Although this paper already indicates a negative response to these questions, they would be in detail discussed in another paper.

This paper did not deal with the Public Library, which was realised in the 1980s and became also the focus of an intensive dispute. The reason is that this project belongs to an exception in that it was consistent with the party frameworks from the 1970s. In this paper, those projects are also missing, which were planned beyond the election in 1990, such as the Provinciehuis or Waagstraat. Because, as a result of the crushing defeat of the PvdA at this election, these projects were planned in different ways than before. These projects would be also dealt with in other papers.

## Notes

- 1 *Doelstelling Binnenstad Groningen*, generally called *Doelstellingennota*
- 2 *ontmoetingsfunctie*
- 3 In this paper, the "inner city" means the area within the canals (*diepen*), as the Plan of Approach for the Inner City defines. The "inner city" in the Objectives Document is larger than this area, including surrounding residential neighbourhoods.
- 4 *Doelstellingennota*, 26-27
- 5 *ibid.*, 23
- 6 *ibid.*, 31-32
- 7 Gemeenteprogramma 74-78, 2
- 8 About how these organs worked, see TSUBOHARA, S. (2005)
- 9 About planning process of the VCP, see TSUBOHARA, S. (2003), URSI-rapport 302. About planning process of the GBP, see TSUBOHARA, S. (2003), URSI-rapport 303
- 10 This is a characteristic Dutch municipal organisation. Roughly speaking, it is the cabinet at the municipal level. See TSUBOHARA, S. (2003), URSI-rapport 302, 2
- 11 He was elected chairman of the PvdA in April 1979.
- 12 GIETEMA, Y. et al. (1992), 24
- 13 Remark by Gietema. Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, March 22nd, 1990
- 14 *Groeistad*
- 15 *stedelijke wonen*
- 16 *Integraal Beleidsplan*
- 17 Remark by *wethouder* of traffic Wallage. Nieuwsblad, March 5th, 1976
- 18 Nieuwsblad, March 4th, 1976
- 19 Gemeenteprogramma 78-82, 7
- 20 Groninger Gezinsbode, January 30th, 1978
- 21 Globaal Bestemmingsplan Binnenstad Groningen 1976, 6-7
- 22 Stedebouwkundig Plan, 60
- 23 In discussing developments in the Verbindingskanaal zone, the municipality called the area west of Emmaviaduct as "*Noord West*" (northwest), where the Cascadeplein was developed. In this paper, the "northwest area of the central station" refers to, naturally, the area between Emmaviaduct and the central station.
- 24 Average width of building facades per street. The width of new buildings must be within  $\pm 30$  percent of this index, in principle. The Dutch word "*korrel*" means grain or texture.
- 25 Gemeenteprogramma 78-82, 8
- 26 GIETEMA, Y. et al. (1992), 19
- 27 Nieuwsblad, January 14th, 1981
- 28 The Dutch word "*boos*" means to be angry.
- 29 Nieuwsblad, March 24th, 1981
- 30 SEIP, M (1992) analyses the effect of the Provinciehuis and Rechtbank on the inner city economy of Groningen. Employees went outside for lunch only sporadically, according to this research.
- 31 Nieuwsblad, February 24th, 1981
- 32 At first, its name was ENWB (*Eerste, Enige, Echte Wielrijders Bond*).
- 33 Remark by Sander Doeve (PSP), Nieuwsblad, September 22nd, 1981
- 34 Globaal Bestemmingsplan Binnenstad Groningen 1976, Voorschriften en Regelen, 1
- 35 Stedebouwkundig Plan, 30
- 36 Nieuwsblad, January 13th, 1982
- 37 *stedebouwkundig deelplan*

- 38 *werkgroep Volkshuisvesting*. Since early 1985, this had been called *werkgroep VROV*.  
39 *een gesloten wand*  
40 Verslag Bijeenkomst D.D. 21-2-1984  
41 Verslag Werkgroepvergadering D.D. 27-3-1984  
42 Onze Binding, February 1984  
43 This council meeting was actually held on 24th.  
44 Verslag Werkgroepvergadering D.D.22-5-1984  
45 Nieuwsblad, May 25th, 1984  
46 *ibid.*, August 14th, 1984  
47 Notulen Werkgroepvergadering D.D. 15-1-1985  
48 The highest court of administrative litigation in the Netherlands  
49 Nieuwsblad, September 26th, 1987  
50 The PTT itself has returned to Den Haag immediately after it was privatised. All photographs in this paper were taken by the author recently, except for those with particular notes.  
51 Nieuwsblad, July 7th, 1983  
52 *ibid.*, December 27th, 1983  
53 GIETEMA, Y. et al. (1992), 23-24  
54 *voorbereidingsbesluit*. With this decision, the municipality can postpone examining the building applications until a new local land use plan is ready.  
55 The Dutch word "herbergen" means to accommodate or harbour.  
56 Verslag Werkgroepvergadering D.D.22-5-1984  
57 Verslag van de Ledenvergadering van 23 mei 1984  
58 *verklaring van geen bezwaar*  
59 Nieuwsblad, June 19th, 1984  
60 *ibid.*, June 20th, 1984  
61 Notulen Werkgroep Volkshuisvesting-Vergadering D.D. 11-9-1984  
62 This motion required the indecisive party group to reject applications for developing large-scale shops in the outskirts area.  
63 Verslag van de Extra Ledenvergadering van 13 september 1984  
64 Onze Binding, September 1984  
65 *ibid.*, November 1984  
66 Verslag van de Extra Ledenvergadering van 13 september 1984  
67 Nieuwsblad, October 6th, 1984  
68 *ibid.*, October 12th, 1984  
69 *ibid.*, January 8th, 1985  
70 *ibid.*, November 8th, 1984  
71 *ibid.*, December 1st, 1984  
72 Notulen Werkgroepvergadering D.D. 11-12-1984  
73 Notulen Werkgroepvergadering D.D. 15-1-1985. At first, this minutes used the word "a small majority", which was later corrected like this.  
74 As mentioned later, an expansion of the Groningen Museum was being planned on Reitemakersrijge.  
75 Nieuwsblad, May 24th, 1985  
76 *ibid.*, June 17th, 1986  
77 *ibid.*, June 20th, 1986  
78 *ibid.*, March 19th, 1986  
79 *ibid.*, June 13th, 1986  
80 *ibid.*, December 5th, 1989  
81 GIETEMA, Y. et al. (1992), 42

- 82 Nieuwsblad, September 14th, 1984
- 83 *ibid.*, March 7th, 1985
- 84 Structuurplan Groningen 1986, 29-30
- 85 Notulen Extra Bijeenkomst Werkgroep VROV 20 januari 1987
- 86 *herkenbaarheid en vindbaarheid*
- 87 Plan van Aanpak voor de Binnenstad, 54
- 88 *intensiveringsgebieden*
- 89 Structuurplan Groningen 1986, 42
- 90 Nieuwsblad, March 19th, 1987
- 91 *ibid.*, September 16th, 1987
- 92 *ibid.*, July 5th, 1988
- 93 Verslag Bijeenkomst Werkgroep VROV. 29/9/1987. At the next meeting, on October 13th, councillor Klaas Swaak found this expression "too decisive", and asked to scrape this part, replacing with "these plans raise questions in these respects, and deserve further study.". His request was accepted.
- 94 Stedebouwkundig Plan, 59-61
- 95 *ruimtelijk historisch waardevolle gebied*
- 96 Globaal Bestemmingsplan Binnenstad Groningen 1976, 41
- 97 *beschermde stadsgezicht*
- 98 Before issuing building permits, the B&W is obliged to consult with this committee. In Groningen, the *welstandscommissie* was reorganised in 1977, and, since then, it has been consisted of external architects and urban planners.
- 99 Gezinsbode, November 4th, 1987
- 100 *ibid.*, September 28th, 1988
- 101 Nieuwsblad, November 7th, 1987
- 102 *ibid.*, January 4th, 1988
- 103 Gezinsbode, April 29th, 1988
- 104 Nieuwsblad, January 16th, 1988
- 105 *ibid.*, December 3rd, 1987
- 106 Gezinsbode, May 9th, 1988
- 107 *ibid.*, April 29th, 1988
- 108 Nieuwsblad, June 17th, 1988
- 109 Gezinsbode, July 4th, 1988
- 110 *ibid.*, July 8th, 1988
- 111 *ibid.*, February 17th, 1989
- 112 *ibid.*, July 22nd, 1988
- 113 Nieuwsblad, October 17th, 1988
- 114 Verslag Werkgroep VROV 18/10/1988
- 115 Another CDA *wethouder*, Hans Morssink, was travelling abroad and absent from this meeting.
- 116 Gezinsbode, November 2nd, 1988
- 117 Plan van Aanpak voor de Binnenstad: een ontwikkelingsstrategie, 60
- 118 GIETEMA, Y. et al. (1992), 42
- 119 Nieuwsblad, February 13th, 1991
- 120 Gezinsbode, June 20th, 1988
- 121 Nieuwsblad, January 16th, 1988
- 122 Gezinsbode, December 5th, 1988
- 123 Remark by Van de Vondervoort. Nieuwsblad, November 2nd, 1988
- 124 Gezinsbode, July 4th, 1988
- 125 Nieuwsblad, November 14th, 1988

- 126 The rest 32.8% was "no opinion".  
127 Gezinsbode, November 9th, 1988  
128 *ibid.*, February 22nd, 1989  
129 Remark by Otten. Gezinsbode, November 18th, 1988  
130 Gezinsbode, November 30th, 1988  
131 *ibid.*, November 14th, 1988  
132 *ibid.*, November 30th, 1988  
133 *ibid.*, November 30th, 1988  
134 *ibid.*, November 30th, 1988  
135 *zichtlijnen*  
136 Gezinsbode, February 3rd, 1989  
137 Remark by party group leader Jan Evenhuis. Gezinsbode, February 22nd, 1989  
138 Nieuwsblad, November 24th, 1988  
139 Gezinsbode, February 3rd, 1989  
140 *ibid.*, February 3rd, 1989  
141 *ibid.*, February 13th, 1989 or Nieuwsblad, February 24th, 1989  
142 Nieuwsblad, January 21st, 1989  
143 Remark by Van de Vondervoort. Nieuwsblad, January 21st, 1989  
144 Gezinsbode, March 6th, 1989  
145 *Klaagschriften*  
146 Gezinsbode, February 13th, 1989  
147 Nieuwsblad, March 22nd, 1989  
148 *zichtzones*  
149 Nieuwsblad, March 29th, 1989  
150 On April 24th, the day before the municipal council dealt with the B&W proposal that asked to make the draft of this plan available for public inspection, the general member meeting of the VVD approved a motion that required the party group to reject this B&W proposal. However, the next day, five among six VVD councillors as well as the PvdA and D'66 supported the proposal, and it was approved. Although 30 objections were lodged during public inspection, the draft was not significantly modified, except for lowering the bridges between buildings by 1.25 meters.  
151 Nieuwsblad, February 1st, 1991

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